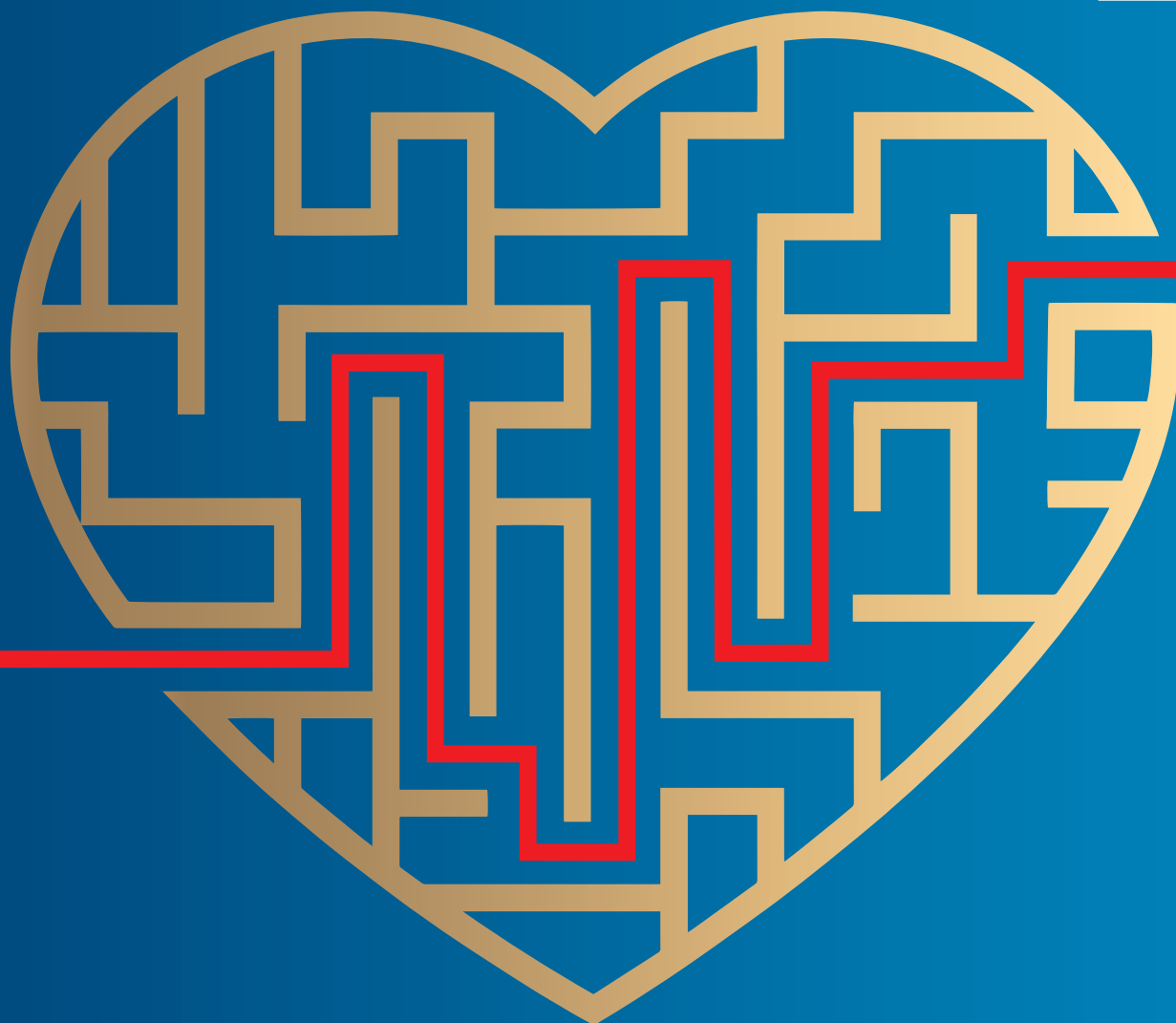


THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND ALUMNI MAGAZINE

# Ingenio

[auckland.ac.nz/ingenio](http://auckland.ac.nz/ingenio)

AUTUMN 2021



## HEARTS & MINDS

Collaborating on cardiovascular research

### Brain gain

Smart Kiwis who  
have come home

### Kauri fightback

Our researchers helping  
save our forests

### Distinguished alumni

Five special members  
of society celebrated

# BIG PICTURE



## *PUMPED TO BE BACK*

Finally, students in 2021 could experience Orientation Week activities on campus. This photo was taken in Alfred Street, which was closed to traffic for three days of food stalls, music and information pop-up tents. The vibe was joyous.

*Photo: Tom Zhao. Instagram @photog.tomzhao*





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'nd of  
who lives a world.

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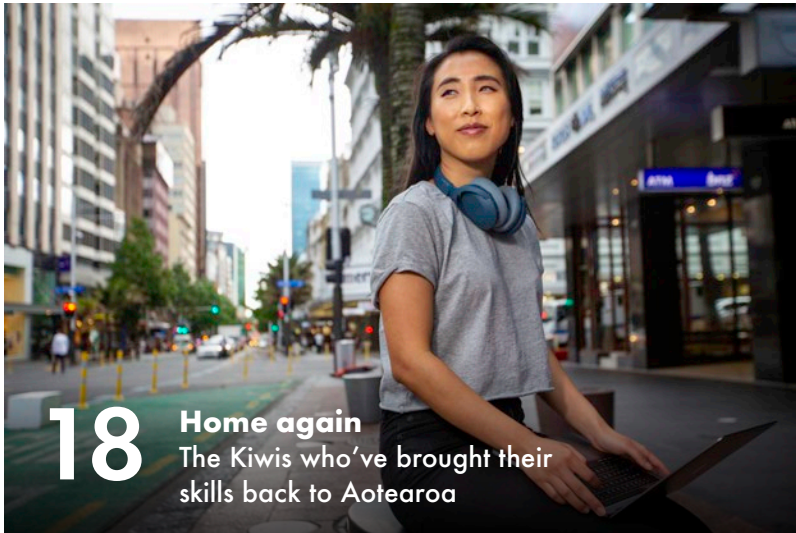
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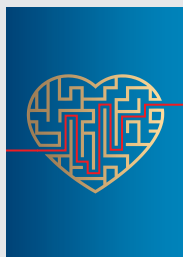
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## Editorial

# REFLECTIONS ON CONNECTIONS



**T**he University has always placed great importance on its relationships. Engaging alumni, extending our reach into local and international communities, and connecting and working with business, government, our donors and supporters are fundamental to our capacity to make positive contributions to society.

This last year has brought reassessment and change to how we continue those relationships. The arrival of Covid-19 challenged how we maintain our connection and shared sense of purpose with those whose relationships are so vital to us. Travel restrictions and lockdowns forced us to connect differently. It was not just teaching that the University took online. Face-to-face meetings of every kind gave way to digital interactions and we discovered advantages as well as limitations.

The Alumni Relations and Development office took the popular 'Raising the Bar' event online during lockdown. Instead of 20 talks in ten bars on one night in Auckland, six of our leading researchers Zoomed from their domestic settings into more than 1,300 homes around the world to present highlights of their work. Raising the Bar 'Home Edition' was born and the technology allowed alumni sprawled across the globe to join the event.

The year 2020 also saw the University, while in lockdown, working with our new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dawn Freshwater, to develop a vision and direction for the coming decade. *Taumata Teitei Vision 2030* draws partnership and engagement into everything the University does. Our experience of the past year has shown we can find new and alternative ways

to maintain and develop our connections and commitments to our partners.

It is almost ten years since I took up the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Strategic Engagement and now I'm moving to a new position as Provost of Universitas 21. As I conclude my time at this University, it is interesting to reflect on where we have come from and where we are headed. We have seen the number of alumni who engage with us each year grow from 48,000 to more than 92,000. Alumni share expertise with students as guest speakers, lecturers and mentors and in just one example of University-alumni volunteering, 7,000 books were collected to help establish 25 libraries in Tonga.

Universities are outward-looking organisations. We have always reached into our communities, recognising the importance of these connections. I am proud of the strong relationships we have with our alumni in New Zealand and the Pacific. I am also proud of the partnerships we have developed around the globe that are crucial for our research, student experience and teaching collaborations. At a critical juncture for the world in terms of global issues such as public health, climate change and tense geopolitics, the unique capacity of universities to work across borders has never been more important.

Covid-19 will continue to affect how we do things, even as the world transitions to an environment where travel resumes and where sustainability considerations are factored into decision making. Our response to the pandemic presents opportunities in our engagement to do things quite differently, to refine our shared purpose and goals and the impact on our communities. There is an exciting future for us all.

## JENNY DIXON

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Strategic Engagement (2013 – May 2021)







# OUR HEARTS *IN OUR HANDS*

Photo: Elise Manahan  
Styling: Billy Wong

Cardiovascular disease kills more than 30 percent of New Zealanders, including around 500 each year who are under 55. Māori death rates from cardiovascular disease are twice those of non-Māori and it is the leading cause of death in Pacific Peoples, at almost one in three. The University of Auckland's Manaaki Mānawa Centre for Heart Research is collaborating with clinicians, heart researchers and community experts from around the country to work towards improving these statistics. **Donna Chisholm** meets some of the people involved. ►

**D**r Anna Rolleston sees everything that is wrong with Western approaches to heart healthcare in the faces of the clients who walk through her doors every day at the Centre for Health in Tauranga.

“These people have come to the end of their journey in the health system. They say, ‘I’ve got nothing to go to the doctor about. I’ve had a stent or bypass surgery and I’m on the right medication, but I’m not well.’ The health system doesn’t do wellness – it only helps you if there is something wrong.”

According to that system, says Anna (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangī and Ngāti Pūkenga), they’re “fixed” but, in all senses of the words, they’re sick at heart.

“We know that putting a stent in your heart doesn’t make people well. It fixes a small aspect of something that causes an illness.”

Now, as co-director of Healthy Hearts for Aotearoa New Zealand (HHANZ), a new Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE) for heart health equity hosted by the University of Auckland, she and a multidisciplinary team of scientists have the chance to change that.

HHANZ will receive \$40.5 million in government funding over the next seven and a half years. One of its key goals is to address the shameful seven- to eight-year gap in life

expectancy between Māori and Pacific Peoples and the rest of the population and help to shape a healthcare system that better meets their needs. In turn, that will help improve New Zealand’s overall heart healthcare statistics across the whole population.

HHANZ draws together a national network of researchers at the newly established Manaaki Mānawa Centre for Heart Research, based at the University of Auckland, Heart Otago and the Christchurch Heart Institute. Base government funding is for the national network, but each heart research centre must raise its own additional funding for research.

Anna and Healthy Hearts co-director Professor Julian Paton say Manaaki Mānawa and the new CoRE must effect real change in heart healthcare. “It can’t be business as usual,” says Julian. “Doing what we have done doesn’t work.”

They emphasise the importance of a holistic approach in which Māori and Pacific cultural beliefs are valued and respected. Despite being disparaged by many Western health professionals, alternative healing is a vital part of treatment for many Indigenous and Pacific Peoples.

“The majority of health professionals are logic- and evidence-based and when you talk about connection to wairua, connection to tipuna, or having healing from a spiritual connection to

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**“The health system doesn’t do wellness – it only helps you if there is something wrong.”** – Dr Anna Rolleston



Dr Anna Rolleston is co-director of Healthy Hearts for Aotearoa New Zealand.





a mountain, if that's not your belief system, it doesn't make any sense to you," says Anna.

It's vital that Māori and Pacific researchers are at front and centre to foster trust in the work, Julian says, because of a fundamental lack of trust by Māori and Pacific Peoples in Western medicines. "There are good reasons why they question Pākehā approaches, particularly around research, so first we have to reinstate that trust."

He believes the launch of Manaaki Mānawa – the name, given by patron Dame Naida Glavish, means preserving the life-force of the heart – was a key reason for the success of the CoRE application.

"We couldn't apply for the CoRE without first forming our heart research centre at the University."

Julian came from the UK's Bristol University in 2017 after being appointed Professor of Translational Physiology – a role established by the University with the aim of launching Manaaki Mānawa.

The new centres will enable disparate heart research teams to work cohesively and rapidly together and remove the traditional silos that are a barrier to collaboration.

Manaaki Mānawa is the only heart research centre in the North Island and many of the people who form its Māori Advisory Group are also on the Māori leadership team for the CoRE. In a nod to the pioneering advances at Green Lane Hospital in the 1960s, by Sir Brian Barratt-Boyes and others, former Green Lane surgeon Dr Alan Kerr, an alumnus and golden graduate, is a consultant to Manaaki Mānawa.

Julian expects the researchers will work with co-funding charities including the Heart Foundation and Cure Kids to "stretch our dollars", as well as fundraising. Although the projects to be funded won't be decided until mid-2021, areas being considered include rheumatic heart disease and cardio-metabolic disease – heart failure combined with hypertension, obesity and diabetes.

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*Dr Corina Grey says we need to build a health system that takes into account all people's needs. Photo: Elise Manahan*

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**"It's great to see a doctor who looks like you, speaks your language and understands your world view."** – Dr Corina Grey



HHANZ co-director Professor Julian Paton says Manaaki Mānawa and the new CoRE must effect real change in heart healthcare.

**“It can’t be business as usual. Doing what we have done doesn’t work.”** – Professor Julian Paton, director of Manaaki Mānawa

## THANK YOU

Each heart health research centre must raise additional funds on top of government funding received, to be able to undertake all research planned. By the end of April 2021, more than 170 donations had been made, through an ongoing appeal, to support the work at Manaaki Mānawa, the Centre for Heart Research. These gifts will help to fund PhD scholarships, clinical fellowships, equipment and outreach programmes. Find out more at: [giving.auckland.ac.nz/heart](http://giving.auckland.ac.nz/heart)

They will also consider teaming up with researchers who have projects already under way, such as University of Auckland public health physician and academic Dr Corina Grey and Associate Professor Matire Harwood. In 2019, they won a \$2 million grant from the Heart Foundation and Healthier Lives National Science Challenge to explore how heart disease is managed – through primary and tertiary care and rehabilitation – in Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Their team is investigating the gaps in evidence-based cardiovascular care at every point in the health spectrum.

“If you have a little gap in primary care, a little gap in the ambulance before you get to hospital, a little gap in hospital and a little gap in rehab, that actually adds up to a huge gap. And we know the gaps aren’t that little in the first place,” says Corina, who is Samoan.

Workforce development is key, she says. “It’s not the only thing, but isn’t it great to go in and see a doctor you have an affinity with, who looks like you, speaks your language and understands your world view?”

It means they’re also more likely to understand the issues their patients face.

“Even in this day and age, I sit in meetings

and think, ‘I wonder if health planners and providers actually realise that paying for parking [at a hospital] is a huge deal for some people if they can’t pay their bills. And if patients have to go somewhere quite far away from where they live, it is very stressful if they have a job where they can’t take time off to access care.

“It’s about building a system that takes into account other people’s needs.”

Importantly, she says, that includes the academic workforce. “We have very few researchers in the cardiovascular space who are Māori or Pacific.”

Despite a Covid-disrupted 2020, Corina’s project has employed and trained a talented team of researchers who’ll be interviewing patients, their whānau and health providers about their experiences in the system. They include two PhD students and two post-doctoral fellows.

“The fellows are early to mid-career researchers and we are training them to be the next research leaders in academia,” says Corina.

Julian and Anna’s leadership of the HHANZ CoRE gives her confidence for the future.

“I’m really excited to be part of the CoRE and I think we will do amazing things. It will take time, but we do have a lot of really motivated and hardworking people.”



## AT THE COALFACE

Someone who knows better than most the inherent problems of Westernised attitudes in the health workforce is New Zealand's first Māori cardiologist, Dr Wil Harrison (Ngāti Porou, Rongowhakaata). He has practised at Counties-Manukau DHB for ten years and is a member of Manaaki Mānawa's Māori Advisory Group.

"We know how to treat cardiovascular disease, be it heart failure or arrhythmias, but for some reason those treatments are not being applied to Māori and Pacific patients in a timely manner, when it is likely to make an important difference," Wil says. "A big part of the reason is systemic."

In South Auckland, heart failure driven by diabetes and obesity is an increasingly common diagnosis.

"Heart failure has lots of causes, but we are seeing a worrying trend of increasing heart failure in patients in their twenties, thirties and forties, whereas in non-Māori and non-Pacific patients it tends to peak in the over-sixties."

Around 75 percent of the patients on whom he performs coronary angiograms have already had a heart attack or acute angina. At

other DHBs and centres overseas, the rate is significantly lower.

"Ideally, we want to pick up those patients earlier," says Wil. "There's something in the chain of the patient getting symptoms to coming to us that doesn't seem to be connecting, at least in South Auckland, and that is resulting in a large number of patients ending up presenting rather late in the disease course."

As a clinician, he'd like to see different ideas for delivery of health services and healthcare education to these patients. Does it work best when community-based or clinic-based? Who is the best person to deliver that healthcare at the coalface and what do patients think is the most effective way to receive that healthcare information?


Wil says Māori or Pacific researchers and clinicians are always at risk of being "drowned out by other agendas" when they're involved in big university projects or units.

"But I am hopeful that this will be different because of the agenda that's been set by the government and our integration right from the start. I'm really pleased with the leadership that's been exhibited in this CoRE." ▶

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**"For some reason, treatments are not being applied to Māori and Pacific patients in a timely manner, when it is likely to make an important difference."**

– Dr Wil Harrison, cardiologist



Dr Wil Harrison is  
New Zealand's first  
Māori cardiologist.

## “What we are doing could be taken up by other Indigenous populations around the world.” – Professor Julian Paton

### MEASURING GENETIC RISK

Two other long-standing heart health research projects that are also expected to work closely with the CoRE team include MENZACS (Multi-Ethnic New Zealand Study of Acute Coronary Syndrome) and the Cardiac Inherited Disease Registry.

The MENZACS study contains data from 2,000 patients admitted to hospital since mid-2015 with their first heart attack. They complete a detailed questionnaire about their diet, exercise, lifestyle, stress and socio-economic status, and give a blood sample for genetic analysis. These patients will be followed up over a number of years.

Professor Rob Doughty, the Heart Foundation Chair of Heart Health at the University of Auckland, says there have been huge advances in the acute inpatient care of people with heart attacks. However, in the two to three years after a coronary, about one in five people will be readmitted to hospital or die from a heart-related event. The mortality rate is continuing to reduce, he says, but there is still more to be done to improve long-term prevention after that first event. Data from patient follow-up, genetic and blood biomarker tests will allow researchers to better understand key differences between those who remain problem-free and those who don't.

“From international studies we understand a number of different aspects of the hereditary components of heart disease, but it varies between countries and ethnicities,” says Rob.

“The challenge is to be able to apply information to our population in New Zealand, in particular for Māori and Pacific Peoples who are at higher risk of those recurrent problems.

“A lot of the information we have on genetic-risk scores in coronary disease is largely derived from European populations.”

The Cardiac Inherited Disease Registry is a genetic database of people who've survived sudden cardiac arrests as the result of a rhythm disturbance and the same information gap applies there. Waikato Hospital cardiologist and arrhythmia specialist Dr Martin Stiles, one of the clinical leaders of the registry and associate professor at the University, says the lack of genetic information from Māori and Pacific patients on international databases makes it difficult to identify the variants responsible, so the local information is crucial.

“We have a large number of Māori and Pacific patients in our registry, but we are much

less likely to pick up a disease-causing mutation for these patients, because we don't know what normal is.”

Data from the United States shows that Black Americans are less likely to survive cardiac arrest, in part because they are less likely to receive immediate CPR. Among the reasons is that they are more likely to live in lower socio-economic areas where there are fewer defibrillators, and the communities receive less education about how to perform CPR. Martin says it wouldn't surprise him if figures here show similar variation by ethnicity.

While we know that Māori and Pacific Peoples are over-represented in statistics for acquired cardiovascular diseases, we don't know the relative incidence of inherited disease.

Despite the suggestion that Māori and Pacific patients may be reluctant to undergo genetic tests, Martin says this hasn't been a problem, particularly when the patients are parents themselves.

“Sometimes people are not that interested in a genetic diagnosis until they have children. Once you start the narrative of whakapapa, they have a motivation to protect them.”

People with genetic mutations that may cause sudden cardiac arrest can be advised to change their lifestyle or take medications. In some cases, implantable defibrillators are recommended.

As an example of the kind of academic-clinical collaborations that Manaaki Mānawa and the CoRE will foster, Martin will, later this year, lead a phase one clinical trial in about 20 patients of an external pacemaker that a team headed by Julian Paton has developed.

The new device mimics the heart's natural rhythm that varies with breathing. Investigators are hailing its potential after animal studies in which it restored muscle function and improved the heart's ability to pump. It is the first time that a pacemaker increases the heart rate on inhalation and slows on exhalation, as opposed to devices that fire in a metronomic rhythm.

In cardiovascular disease in general, says Julian, the lack of Māori and Pacific data means researchers don't even know whether all the recognised effective treatments, including drugs, work as well in those patients, because internationally, they've been trialled predominantly in white populations.

“That's something we can quite easily address through the CoRE funding,” says Julian. “Our Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), in tandem

### HEART DISEASE STATISTICS

- Eighty percent of deaths from cardiovascular disease are preventable.
- Māori and Pacific Peoples experience the most significant inequities in exposure to cardiovascular-disease risk factors compared with other ethnic groups in New Zealand.
- Heart disease kills 30 percent of New Zealanders and five percent of those are under 55.
- Māori heart failure mortality is twice that of non-Māori.
- Heart failure hospitalisation is 4.5 times higher for Māori vs non-Māori men and women.
- Heart disease is the biggest killer of women in New Zealand, costing 3,000 lives a year.



with the patient identifier number, shows which drugs have been prescribed and dispensed to patients. It doesn't, of course, reveal if the patient has taken them."

A bigger problem, however, is access.

## EQUITY OPPORTUNITY

Community outreach will be a vital part of both the CoRE and Manaaki Mānawa's work. Some of that will be held at the University of Auckland's new campus in central Manukau, a project led by Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific, Damon Salesa.

The outreach will extend into schools, not only to improve heart health literacy, but also to excite the next generation of Māori and Pacific scientists about research and give them the confidence to become the investigators of tomorrow, says Julian.

Another plan is for a heart research bus, equipped with machines for echocardiography, ultrasound scans and blood screening, to be used in rural communities.

"This in itself addresses equity as these populations never get invited to be part of research," says Julian.

Equity issues aren't unique to New Zealand, but this opportunity to address them is, because of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

"We need to uphold the Treaty in all that we're doing," says Julian.

"And as a result of Te Tiriti, we have a huge opportunity to demonstrate globally the best research approach for any disease.

"What we are doing could be taken up by other Indigenous populations around the world. Māori and Pacific leaders in our CoRE are already communicating with them."

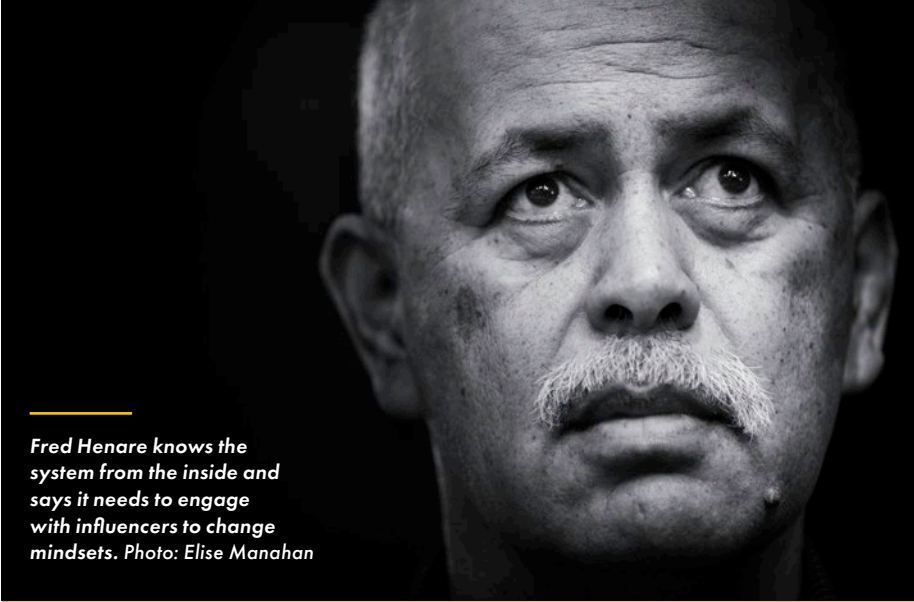
The CoRE's timing couldn't be better, says Anna, coinciding with recommendations of the Waitangi Tribunal to address New Zealand's failure to improve Māori health outcomes and last year's release of the Health and Disability Systems review, which proposed the creation of a Māori Health Authority.

"We have a government that is on the same page and a group of people genuinely engaged in doing something differently – even though it's scary."

It's likely the CoRE will lead ultimately to a wider roll-out of primary services such as Rolleston's Centre for Health (formerly the Cardiac Clinic), which offers a gamut of care including lifestyle, nutrition, exercise and stress management, as well as GP consultations and Rongoā Māori (traditional Māori medicine).

Patients simply want health professionals to stop telling them what to do, says Anna.

"We're saying let's go into communities, find out what their concerns are, and help them to develop the solutions that fit." ■



*Fred Henare knows the system from the inside and says it needs to engage with influencers to change mindsets. Photo: Elise Manahan*

## “The system isn't working for Māori.”

**F**red Henare has seen many sides of the health system, having been treated for type 2 diabetes and heart problems, being a participant in research and working as an emergency planner for primary and community healthcare for Auckland district health boards.

Fred, 59, a diabetic since his late thirties, was diagnosed with bradycardia, and later tachycardia, after being involved in a clinical trial at Middlemore Hospital investigating a potential treatment for diabetes.

Raised on the East Cape, Fred says Māori and Pacific patients aren't necessarily suspicious or cautious about research trials, but “generally it's outside our experience”.

“In Te Araroa, the township nearest to where I was born, they haven't had a regular GP for nearly seven years. I've come to understand that Māori have no expectations of the health system until it's way too late.

“There doesn't seem to be any desire on behalf of the health system to change that with Māori. Previous community development experience with Māori and Pacific suggests they want the same thing as everyone else; the problem is that their ability to access it depends on them understanding what their expectation should be. The system isn't working for us.”

He says the evolution of kōhanga reo showed that Māori could achieve significant change for themselves in education and the same could happen in healthcare. But he says Māori and Pacific Peoples feel intimidated by the health system.

“In most communities, a doctor is put on a pedestal as being more clever and influential than they are. The patient sits there and does what they're told rather than asserting their right to reasonable healthcare and saying, ‘Hang on a minute, I don't understand, you need to run through that again.’”

He says the Healthy Hearts for Aotearoa New Zealand needs to engage with the people that the Māori and Pacific community regard as influencers – people they look to for advice and guidance day to day – and lift their level of health literacy. Typically, he says, DHBs regard community engagement as engagement with other health organisations they fund, not necessarily the community itself.

His advice for the researchers? “Look to the community to answer their own problems, with your help.”



Te Kawehau Hoskins succeeds Dame Cindy Kiro as Ihonuku.  
Photo: Elise Manahan

## TOP ROLE FOR TE KAWEHAU HOSKINS

New era with Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori and a new name

Associate Professor Te Kawehau Hoskins is the new Ihonuku, Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori, taking up the role following the departure of Dame Cindy Kiro to become chief executive of Te Apārangi Royal Society of New Zealand.

Te Kawehau (Ngāti Hau) is the former head of school at Te Puna Wānanga, the School of Māori and Indigenous Education, and deputy dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work. She acknowledges the

work done by her predecessor, Dame Cindy, establishing the University's Māori language strategy and revitalisation of te reo Māori ([tinyurl.com/TeReoLanguagePlan](https://tinyurl.com/TeReoLanguagePlan)). Part of that revitalisation saw the main menu of the University website become bilingual in March. Dame Cindy also contributed to *Taumata Teitei Vision 2030* and *Strategic Plan 2025*.

One of Te Kawehau's priorities as Ihonuku will be to draw on mātauranga Māori at the University. "I strongly believe we need to do it together. For me, indigenising the University is about finding ways where Māori knowledge, ways of being, thinking and doing can thrive."

The University also has a new Māori name to replace its current official Māori name. The name, gifted by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, is Waipapa Taumata Rau, meaning 'Waipapa: the Place of Many Peaks'. The name is inspired by Waipapa, located on the shoreline of Te Tōangaroa (Mechanics Bay) from which Waipapa Marae takes its name. Taumata Rau speaks of the many 'peaks' within the University and is an exhortation to achievement and excellence. A tikanga process, including the iwi and the University community, will occur prior to Matariki to confirm the name, with an unveiling to mark the occasion.

**Ihonuku story & video:** [auckland.ac.nz/hoskins-ihonuku](https://auckland.ac.nz/hoskins-ihonuku)

## CIE EVOLVES WITH CHANGES

Partnership and a departure at Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The government's venture investment vehicle, New Zealand Growth Capital Partners (NZGCP), signed on this year to encourage entrepreneurial students at the Business School, through sponsorship and network support. It will provide substantial opportunities to increase the potential and capability of New Zealand's next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs.

Velocity is the University of Auckland's student

entrepreneurship development programme, delivered through the Business School's Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), and is free for all students. Past ventures spun out of Velocity include PowerbyProxy, whose wireless charging technology was bought by Apple, and education technology company Kami, which has more than 20 million users.

Wendy Kerr, who was director of CIE but recently left the University after six years in the role, says the boost from NZGCP is good news.

"Staff from NZGCP had already been supporting our students through mentorship and volunteering to be judges for our business plan competitions, so we greatly appreciate the support of people with a shared purpose and passion. New Zealand is still at the start of its journey to develop into a knowledge-based economy and so a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem is essential."

Wendy led the development and the launch of Unleash Space, the epicentre of entrepreneurship at the University, nearing her audacious goal of having ten percent of students engaging with innovation and entrepreneurship programmes. This positioned the University to win Asia-Pacific Entrepreneurial University of the Year in 2020. Darsel Keane, the former associate director of CIE, has been promoted to director.

**See:** [auckland.ac.nz/government-support-for-velocity](https://auckland.ac.nz/government-support-for-velocity)

Velocity, the student entrepreneurship programme, has gone from strength to strength.





# DEIDRE BROWN HONOURED

Expert in Māori architecture  
elected to Royal Society

**P**rofessor Deidre Brown, head of the School of Architecture and Planning, has been elected to the Academy of the Royal Society Te Apārangi, the only one of 455 honorary Fellows with an architecture and art history background. Deidre (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu) is a founding researcher of Māori architectural history and design. Six other University of Auckland researchers were made Fellows this year. See: [auckland.ac.nz/2021-royal-society](https://auckland.ac.nz/2021-royal-society)

In other news, the Deputy Dean of Engineering, Professor Rosalind Archer, has become Engineering New Zealand's president. She will be involved in the organisation's strategic direction and governance as well as chairing board meetings and working with fellow Engineering alumnus Dr Richard Templer, the organisation's chief executive.



Above: Professor Deidre Brown is a Fellow of the Royal Society Te Apārangi.

Right: Professor Rosalind Archer is Engineering New Zealand's new president.

## OUR SCIENTISTS WIN PLAUDITS

Te Pūnaha Matatini's work  
recognised at highest levels

**T**he Prime Minister's Science Prize was awarded to Te Pūnaha Matatini in April, for its contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand's Covid-19 response.

The prize is awarded for transformative science that has had a significant economic, health, social or environmental impact.

Te Pūnaha Matatini is a national Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE) hosted by the University, and was recognised for its work developing mathematical models, analysing data and communicating the results to inform the government's response to the pandemic.

The University has a number of researchers across faculties involved in Te Pūnaha Matatini, including Professor Shaun Hendy (Science) and Associate Professor Siouxsie Wiles (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences) who rose to prominence during the pandemic.

Siouxsie says people needed to understand how their actions could help in the pandemic, and it empowered them to know the reasons.

"Instead of just being told we need you to

do this ... we'd say, 'Here's why, here's how you can help get us through.' The evidence shows that communities that come together in times of crisis, that look after each other, are the communities that survive that crisis."

Siouxsie's individual efforts in science communication have also been recognised. Her work included teaming up with *The Spinoff* cartoonist Toby Morris to make the science around the pandemic understandable. She was supreme winner at the Stuff-Westpac Women of Influence Awards in 2020 and crowned Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year this year on 31 March. Professor Shaun Hendy was invested as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year Honours.

**Full story:** [auckland.ac.nz/NZer-of-the-Year](https://auckland.ac.nz/NZer-of-the-Year)

### MORE NEWS & RESEARCH

Keep up to date  
with University news  
[auckland.ac.nz/all-  
UOA-news-stories](https://auckland.ac.nz/all-<br/>UOA-news-stories)

Associate Professor Siouxsie Wiles won Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year and is also part of Te Pūnaha Matatini, the CoRE that won the PM's Science Prize.



# KUPE SCHOLARS ANNOUNCED

The third cohort of Kupe scholars is ready to rise to challenges

**W**hen Lawrence Gao started school in New Zealand, he didn't speak any English. In March, before a large crowd, he joined 16 other top students on stage at the University of Auckland Business School to receive a prestigious Kupe Leadership Scholarship.

Lawrence, who is completing a Bachelor of Science (Honours) specialising in psychology, is passionate about education. "I see it as a vehicle to drive social change," he said.

With diverse research areas including how to bridge gaps in our education system for more equitable outcomes, protect our natural environment, and advocate for marginalised youth, the Kupe Leadership Scholars will use their knowledge and skills to build a brighter future.

The Kupe Scholarships were founded by Canadian philanthropists John and Marcy McCall MacBain, who gifted more than \$1 million to the University to launch the initiative, aimed at developing great leaders. Now



in its third year and supported by local donors, the scholarships are open to top postgraduate students. There were 117 applications this year. Those selected receive a bespoke development programme that includes mentoring from leaders in their field.

This year's event included a panel discussion with Kupe executive chair David Downs, Vice-Chancellor Dawn Freshwater and Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific Damon Salesa. Full story: [auckland.ac.nz/kupe-scholars-announced](https://auckland.ac.nz/kupe-scholars-announced)

Full list: [tinyurl.com/2021-kupe-winners](https://tinyurl.com/2021-kupe-winners)

Above, the 2021 Kupe Scholars except one who was still in MIQ. Top: David Downs, Damon Salesa and Dawn Freshwater discuss leadership at the event. Photos: Richard Ng

## STRONG IMPACT

Auckland is a world-leading university in sustainable development

**T**he University of Auckland is No 1 in New Zealand and has remained in the global top ten of the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings for 2021. These rankings, launched in 2019, measure the achievement of universities around the world against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"The Impact Rankings demonstrate how universities like Auckland can play a key role in thought leadership, germane research and sustainable operations," says Vice-Chancellor Professor Dawn Freshwater.

She says the University is very proud of this year's overall 9th= position, despite not retaining the top place it held in 2019 and 2020. "For the first two years ... Auckland led the world. We have taken a leadership opportunity and shared our work with colleagues internationally, helping many universities with their own work to measure

progress against the SDGs. This is an area now being taken very seriously in strategic planning around the world including by us, with the SDGs one of the driving influences behind *Taumata Teitei*, Auckland's new strategic plan and vision."

The 2021 rankings were announced in April at the THE Innovation and Impact Summit, an online conference that focused on the value of international research and collaboration. It was hosted by the University in partnership with Pennsylvania State University.

In June the QS World University Rankings will be announced. Auckland was ranked 81st in 2020 and No 1 in New Zealand. The QS subject rankings in March showed Auckland has two subjects in the world's Top 30, ten in the Top 50 and 30 in the Top 100. Pharmacy and pharmacology are the highest-rated, followed by education. Full stories: [auckland.ac.nz/the-top-ten](https://auckland.ac.nz/the-top-ten) and [auckland.ac.nz/QS-subject-rankings](https://auckland.ac.nz/QS-subject-rankings)







## A WORD FOR THE DEFENCE

**A**s a defence lawyer for more than 35 years, I have been challenged and sometimes even despised by people who ask, ‘How can you defend someone who is guilty?’

Few people have asked me, “How can a prosecutor condemn an innocent person?” Or “What if that innocent person was found guilty and unfairly sentenced to prison?” This is why I vigorously defend my clients. Few people are made to confront those questions. Guilt founded on tainted evidence or evidence disseminated through the media is not justice.

There are few topics as complicated as the guilt or innocence of a person charged with a crime, especially a crime that has excited insatiable public interest. With mainstream media less restrained in publishing all manner of so-called evidence in an unaccountable manner, along with opinions and assessments of cases without knowing the full extent of that evidence, there’s a real threat to fair trial rights. Then there’s social media, which seems to be a law unto itself.

Trial by media is a term that describes the impact of broadcast, newspaper and social media coverage on an accused’s case and reputation by creating widespread perception of guilt before, during and after the verdict. The media can provoke an atmosphere of ill-informed public frenzy akin to a lynch mob, that makes a fair trial almost impossible.

The media has the power to change whole viewpoints through which the public, including future jurors, perceive various events – to the prejudice of an accused. To achieve a fair trial, there must be vigorous constraints on media soundbites or sensational reporting to curb any encroachment on a court’s jurisdiction to determine guilt or innocence through due process. This prevents bias, prejudice and predetermination of any criminal case.

All too often details and assessments of potential evidence are published before a person appears in court, rendering futile any application for suppression of name or facts. News crews interview neighbours and ask them to comment on the occupants of a property, or what they

believe has happened. The golden principles of the presumption of innocence, and guilt beyond reasonable doubt, go unheeded. Even when this undue media influence occurs, building public opinion against the accused, there are few or no sanctions imposed on the media painting a picture of an alleged criminal.

Social media is a way of modern life, but its impact on fair trial rights is still being investigated. Research indicates that social media engagement with criminal trials leads to a greater public desire for vengeance and encouragement of vigilante attitudes and behaviours.

There have been many cases where people were found guilty only to have their case proved a miscarriage of justice years later, after new evidence emerges and technologies improve. This is the importance of defending the accused and preserving fundamental fair trial rights until the final moment. If the case cannot be proved, they are not guilty. They walk free. That is justice.

Today, rather than the well-founded legal principle of the presumption of innocence until found guilty, the presumption of guilt is often assumed. This is communicated to society through the media with little regard for the legal responsibility to prove a charge ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ and is a degradation of important legal principles. Distorted and sensational reporting should never become the primary influencers in a trial.

So, who protects fair trial rights against illegitimate publications by the media and social media? It is the criminal defence lawyer. When confronted by adverse public opinion, I remind everyone that I am fighting to ensure the rule of law prevails. One thing is clear: ready access to online information presents unique challenges to the justice system, but the pervasive influence of media must be strongly checked, always.

I’ll continue to target unfair practices created when media reincarnates itself as a ‘public court’ and I’ll denounce trial by media where public opinion against an accused is built up through unjustified influence. Freedom of speech is not absolute. No one, including the Fourth Estate, is above the law.

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**About the author:**  
**Marie Dyhrberg (LLB)**  
is a **Queen’s Counsel**  
specialising in **criminal law, human rights law and international criminal law.**

*Photo: Elise Manahan*

*This article reflects the opinion of the author and is not necessarily that of the University of Auckland.*



# COVID-19 UPSIDE: THE KIWI BRAIN GAIN

The consensus among Kiwis who have prematurely returned home because of Covid-19 is that they're enjoying the opportunities here. Danelle Clayton talks to four alumni about the upsides of working and living in New Zealand again.

## Get in touch

Have you returned home from overseas because of Covid-19? Share your story with: [ingenio@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ingenio@auckland.ac.nz)

There are three universal truths on which our expats, returning home because of Covid, seem to agree. The first is that there is an exciting air about working in New Zealand; that we could be on the verge of a vibrant new economic era. Second is the gripe about the traffic. And third is the cost of groceries. So, with push and pull factors at play, will they stay? And are we doing enough to keep them here?

With the second-largest overseas population per capita in the OECD (around one million), the homeward migration of Kiwis since the Covid-19 pandemic presents an extraordinary economic opportunity, even if only a small percentage change their plans and return home.

According to expat organisation Kea New Zealand, most returnees are highly skilled and come from senior positions in high-value sectors. Many are also part of the worldwide diaspora of University of Auckland alumni.

"My industry, the technology sector, has grown massively since I left five years ago," says Lucy Luo (BCom Finance, LLB Hons, 2012).

"There's more venture funding around for start-ups than there used to be, and they are increasingly led by experienced founders or executives rather than first-timers. It's a great time to be working in tech in New Zealand."

Lucy's working OE in Singapore and Amsterdam meant exposure to greater-scale and more-mature tech ecosystems than in New Zealand, as well as lots of travel.

Now she is back in Auckland as the chief of staff at First AML, which provides software to help companies comply with anti-money-laundering regulations.

"Having seen the Covid-19 numbers spike across Europe, I decided to leave. I felt very grateful at how our government here took care of its citizens during the pandemic."

In her new role, she says there is something magical about working with a bunch of awesome individuals taking a Kiwi company global.

"While the tech sector is booming, unfortunately Māori and Pacific people are quite under-represented. It would be good to create more supportive pathways for people of all backgrounds to be involved in, and benefit from, the success of New Zealand's tech sector."

Statistics New Zealand says we are experiencing our first net gain of New Zealand citizens at the border since data collection began in the late 1970s. In the 12 months to January 2021, New Zealand gained 33,200 people, 20,800 of them New Zealand citizens. Historically, New Zealand has had an annual net loss of Kiwis. Kea New Zealand says what's notable is the return of highly skilled New Zealand citizens who would not have come back otherwise. In August 2020, Kea launched its 'Welcome Home Survey' of 15,000 expats,





Above: Jon Vollemaere returned to New Zealand for a few months and has stayed. Right: Lucy Luo at the Matka Canyon in Macedonia.

**“If they have the skills to go to the other side of the world, start from scratch and become a success, they can do the same in their own backyard.”**

– Jon Vollemaere

**“The technology sector has grown massively since I left five years ago.”** – Lucy Luo

to better understand the migration intentions of its membership. The survey found 7 percent of respondents had already returned and 49 percent intended to return, 24 percent in the next 12 months and the remainder over the next four years – signalling a long-term trend. Nearly a third are returning with families (29 percent) and 10 percent are returning with pets.

The report’s analysis was supported by Distinguished Professor Sir Peter Gluckman of Kōi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures, who says that Covid-19 is having an undisputed impact on the volume and calibre of returnees.

“This includes a significant number in an age range and talent pool who were generally previously assumed unlikely to return at the height of their game. The question is whether this opportunity may need to be encouraged and what barriers need to be removed,” Peter says.

**J**on Vollemaere (BCom, Finance & Commercial Law, 1993) is a successful entrepreneur in the field of financial technology. He is the Founder and CEO of R5, an international marketplace centred on emerging currencies. Based in New York City and London for around 30 years, Jon made a snap decision to return home temporarily with his wife and young daughter in March 2020.

“We were going to come home for two to three months until Covid blew over. We packed five bags and jumped on a plane three days later.

“When we arrived in Auckland it was in lockdown so we isolated at a friend’s bach on Waiheke Island and haven’t left.

“Now we work from home, mainly UK hours. Zoom allows your team to be internationally dispersed, our daughter plays on the beach almost every day, and luckily for us there’s no traffic on the island.”

Jon believes returnees could set in motion an economic snowball effect.

“But if the environment for that to happen is not addressed, then a decent proportion may well boomerang once the smoke clears.

“We have seen reports on ‘the productivity problem’, which is partly due to a lack of international skills and experience within most New Zealand firms,” Jon says. “I hear time and time again about highly skilled returning Kiwis failing to get jobs because of their lack of a local network, or projects being too small, or that they’re overqualified, but that is rubbish.

“I’ve hired plenty of overqualified people and those who are far smarter than me.”

Jon encourages Kiwi employers to seize the opportunity to hire returning talent and also hopes some expats might start their own New Zealand-based ventures.

“If they have the skills, drive, knowledge and self-belief to go to the other side of the world, start from scratch and become a success, sometimes in another language, those people can do the same in their own backyard.”



Kyleene Jones says she was surprised to find a buoyant start-up market in New Zealand.  
Photo: Elise Manahan

**“What will keep people here is knowing others are staying too.”**

– Kyleene Jones

### Alumni: share your experience

Wherever you are in the world, you can become part of Alumni Connect, our informal mentoring tool through which alumni share their insights with current students. See: [auckland.ac.nz/alumni-connect](http://auckland.ac.nz/alumni-connect)

**K**yleene Jones (BCom, Accounting and Marketing, 2013) believes we are seeing the beginning of a new wave of entrepreneurs coming through in New Zealand.

“People are taking a punt. Quite a few friends have started their own businesses here in the midst of Covid,” she says.

Kyleene, 29, was on the rise in the start-up space in London as the senior general manager at Deliveroo, a food-delivery business, when Covid-19 forced her to change tack.

“When Covid kicked off, we made tracks to Australia for a wedding and to watch what was happening in the UK from afar. The wedding was cancelled, our stay was extended to six months and we were in lockdown in Melbourne. It was tough working UK hours. We found ourselves in limbo.”

Seeing the freedom across the ditch made it an easy decision for Kyleene to move back home.

She left her job, her partner deferred his MBA at Oxford, and they returned to Auckland.

To her surprise, Kyleene found a buoyant start-up market and landed a job with Auror, a homegrown crime intelligence platform with a global focus.

“The role I was looking for wasn’t advertised, but most of the start-ups I contacted were willing to create something for me.

“My partner got a great job, too, and we’ve even bought a house.”

Despite putting down roots, Kyleene hasn’t yet finished with her travels, but this time would like to take a New Zealand company international.

“I love being close to family and reconnecting with old friends. But it can be hard to feel globally connected here.

“Kiwis are very non-confrontational and I don’t think we ask the hard questions enough.

“What will keep people here is knowing that others are staying, too.

“We realise New Zealand has a really good work-life balance and you can have an exciting career here, too.”

**T**ao Lin (Conjoint BA/LLB, 2011) has continued to work remotely for her Japanese employer since she came home from Tokyo last May.

With Japanese salaries generally lower than in New Zealand, she has found the high cost of living in Auckland a “manageable struggle”.

“After New Zealand reported its first case of Covid, things escalated rapidly. I got one of the last direct Air New Zealand flights home, leaving me one week to pack up my life,” she says.

“The past year has been difficult for a lot of people. It’s sad that young Kiwis are missing out on international travel, as you learn so much from different cultures and grow as a result. But we should remember it’s an immense privilege that not everyone can afford to experience.”

Since returning, Tao has launched the *Not Your Token Minority* podcast, a series for often-overlooked minorities to tell their personal stories and experiences.

“I’ve spoken to a few people for my podcast who returned to New Zealand because of Covid and I follow others on my social media.

“The common experience is, while it can be frustrating having your life overseas disrupted or cut short, everyone is grateful to be in a country where the government acts fast and in the interests of its people.

“The past year or so has shown many of us how important it is to be adaptable and resilient in the face of uncertainty.” ■

■ See page 34 ‘Around the Globe’ for Kiwis who have remained overseas.

Tao Lin is working remotely for her Japanese employer.  
Photo: Elise Manahan





# THE REAL JAIME KING

Professor Jaime King has finally been able to come to New Zealand to take up her role as the inaugural John and Marylyn Mayo Chair in Health Law.



**W**hen Professor Jaime King started teaching law at the UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, her name was in lights.

On a huge billboard outside the building in which she was teaching, there was Jaime King in knee-high boots and a mask and cracking a whip.

“It was pretty funny, a billboard with Jaime King pronouncing ‘Get on your knees!’ for the first month I was teaching.”

It was the other Jaime King, promoting the movie *Sin City*. “I was young and nervous and all I could see was this billboard running down the side of the building as I was about to teach.”

Jaime’s arrival in New Zealand to become the inaugural John and Marylyn Mayo Chair in Health Law was less stressful. It involved cupcakes.

In January, she and her husband James and sons Otis and Asa arrived in New Zealand for their quarantine stint. They had been due in June 2020, but the pandemic put paid to that. It was Asa’s seventh birthday the day after they arrived. Someone at the Holiday Inn MIQ noticed his date of birth and delivered a birthday card signed by staff, along with a giant cupcake.

“We had packed streamers and decorations so we could have a little MIQ party for him,” says Jaime. “But this was so thoughtful. It made him feel really special and welcome in his new country.”

“Those two weeks went pretty smoothly. The boys were in one room enjoying Netflix and we got on with our work days, but could also go for MIQ walks as we weren’t in the city.”

It was more than they’d been able to do for a while. “The wildfires in California were especially bad in 2020,” says Jaime. “We couldn’t walk outside at all for about three weeks and we couldn’t go to indoor places because of Covid.”

When the family got out of quarantine, they headed straight to a restaurant for breakfast.

“None of us had been in a restaurant in almost a year, so the kids were excited, as were we. In photos from that time, we’re all grinning. We went to the beach, the weather was beautiful and the kids were able to go to school.”

The family did experience another lockdown,

but didn’t find it too bad because they could still get outside. “It was good for the children to recognise how fragile freedom is and how we all have to do our part to make sure everyone stays safe.”

Jaime started her role in July 2020, working remotely. “I joined Law faculty meetings on Zoom and the University was wonderful in allowing me to continue my ongoing research projects.”

Her research investigates drivers of healthcare costs in the US, and the impact of market consolidation on healthcare prices and competition. Here, she is teaching second-year torts and was assigned to cover ACC in her first week. “I had to read up about it and I kept saying to my husband, ‘You’re not going to believe this; if you’re injured, regardless of fault, they take care of you!’ In the US, it’s not designed to help the person who’s injured, or to immediately get them rehabilitated.”

While still in the US, Jaime collaborated with Auckland’s Professor Jo Manning, also an expert in health law. “UC Hastings wanted me to give a lecture about Covid-19, and I said, ‘Wouldn’t it be good to bring in Jo?’ She can talk about the New Zealand response to Covid-19’. So we did the lecture together.”

One of the professors who organised that lecture also works part-time at the University of New Mexico. Later, he brought together law students from New Mexico, UC Hastings, University of Tasmania and Auckland for an online discussion of issues arising at the intersection of law, medicine and ethics, including privacy, Covid-19, mental illness and substance abuse.

“Covid brought a lot of tragedy and hardship around the world, but it also taught us some interesting lessons around remote and collaborative working,” says Jaime. “There had been so many discussions about, ‘can it really work’ and ‘can people really connect’ and the answer is yes.”

Jaime has also had the chance to meet John Mayo, who funded her position in honour of his wife, Marylyn, a pioneer professor in health law.

“Marylyn’s story really moved me. I know what it’s like to be a law professor in healthcare and a mother. I loved her story and it really drove me to want to take the job.”

– Denise Montgomery

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Professor Jaime King began her role in July 2020, working remotely at first, before arriving in New Zealand in early 2021.

Photo: Elise Manahan

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**“It was pretty funny, a billboard with Jaime King pronouncing ‘Get on your knees!’ for the first month I was teaching.”**

– Professor Jaime King, Faculty of Law



Dr Tim Angeli-Gordon:  
getting to the bottom of  
misfiring stomachs.

## GAME-CHANGER FOR GUT

Research a world-first in finding  
solution to stomach disorders

**R**esearchers at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI) have demonstrated that a technique used to correct an abnormally beating heart could be applied to correct disorders of the stomach.

Their research could revolutionise the treatment of conditions such as gastroparesis, which affects the movement of the stomach muscles causing

nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

The research, led by Dr Tim Angeli-Gordon and PhD student Zahra Aghababaie at the ABI, discovered how ablation – or the precise ‘burning’ of tissue – can be used to control the naturally occurring electricity in the stomach. This is the first ‘proof-of-concept’ to show that ablation, a common treatment for correcting irregular heart rhythms, could be applied to the stomach.

The stomach, like the heart, depends on bioelectrical signals to regulate it.

“Just as we can suffer from abnormal electrical heartbeats, we can also suffer from abnormal electrical activation in our stomach,” says Tim.

The stomach has underlying bioelectrical ‘slow wave’ activity, which co-ordinates the contraction of the muscles that mix and move contents into and through the gastrointestinal tract. Sometimes those waves don’t work as they should, causing stomach dysrhythmias.

The ABI researchers showed that ablation could be used to create localised electrical conduction blocks in the gut. The technology can now be further developed to help regulate abnormal slow-wave dysrhythmias in the stomach. The research is ongoing and supported by a grant from the Health Research Council and a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship from the Royal Society Te Apārangi.

Full story: [auckland.ac.nz/ABI-gut-treatment](http://auckland.ac.nz/ABI-gut-treatment)

## MARINE SPECIES ON THE MOVE

Climate change heating oceans too  
much for species to cope

**M**arine life is changing its distribution away from the equator in direct response to climate change, according to a new study.

This the first time it’s been noted on a global scale across all kinds of species. Since the 1950s, the number of species has decreased at the equator and increased in the subtropics. This is the case across all 48,661 species in the study, including those living on the seabed (benthic) and in open water (pelagic), such as fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

A manta ray at Raja Ampat, Indonesia.  
Photo: Mark Costello



The results from the University of Auckland-led research show that pelagic species, more than benthic, have shifted poleward in the northern hemisphere. The lack of a similar shift in the southern hemisphere is because ocean warming has been greater in the northern than southern hemisphere.

The study was the culmination of lead author Chhaya Chaudhary’s PhD at the University and a research group who studied the literature and data on particular taxonomic groups in detail, including crustaceans, fish and worms. The data was from the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS), an online world database whose establishment was led by the University’s Professor Mark Costello as part of the Census of Marine Life, a global marine discovery programme. The study, and others in progress, shows that the number of marine species declines once the annual mean sea temperature is above 20 to 25°C, varying with different species.

“Human-caused climate change has already affected marine biodiversity at a global scale,” says Mark, who recently won the Shorland Medal from the NZ Association of Scientists for his pioneering work in the field of ocean diversity informatics. “Climate change is with us now, and its pace is accelerating.”

Full story: [auckland.ac.nz/marine-species-move](http://auckland.ac.nz/marine-species-move)



# GREEN-EYED ROVERS

Study reveals dogs can exhibit human-like emotions

**D**ogs may be our best friends, but best friends can get jealous. A University of Auckland study has provided evidence that dogs exhibit jealous behaviour and can imagine their owner petting another dog, even when they can't see what's going on.

Owners often claim their dogs show jealous behaviours ranging from vocalisations, agitated behaviour or pulling on a leash. Now, the study, published in *Psychological Science*, supports that.

"Dogs exhibit jealous behaviour when their human companion interacts with a potential rival," says lead author Amalia Bastos from the School of Psychology. "We wanted to study this behaviour more fully to determine if dogs could, like humans, mentally represent a situation that evoked jealousy."

The study was done at the University's Animal Minds Lab by a research team that included Associate Professor Alex Taylor, Rebecca Hassall, Patrick Neilands and Byung Lim.



In humans, jealousy is closely linked with self-awareness, one reason animal-cognition researchers are interested in studying jealousy and other emotions in animals. Dogs appear to be one of few species that display jealous behaviours in ways similar to a human child when their carer gives affection to another child.

For the test, researchers put 18 dogs in situations where they could see their owner interacting with a realistic fake dog, and in situations where they couldn't see the same interaction because it was hidden behind a screen. There was also a control test. The dogs pulled with the same force when the rival fake dog was hidden as they did in the trial where the owner was petting a fake rival in an interaction that was fully visible.

Full story and video: [auckland.ac.nz/dogs-get-jealous](https://auckland.ac.nz/dogs-get-jealous)

Some of the research team. From left, Associate Professor Alex Taylor, Rebecca Hassall, Amalia Bastos and Patrick Neilands.

## MORE RESEARCH

Keep up to date with University research and news at [auckland.ac.nz/all-UOA-news-stories](https://auckland.ac.nz/all-UOA-news-stories)

# BRAIN SCANS YIELD CLUES

Research explores what Covid-19 does to the brain

**N**euroscientist Dr Helen Murray's expertise with a tiny part of the brain is helping unravel the mysteries of Covid-19's neurological effects.

Helen has a collaborative role with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States and is a research fellow in the Human Brain Plasticity and Neurodegenerative Diseases Research Group in the University of Auckland's Centre for Brain Research.

For weeks, she pored over scans of brain tissue from 19 people, aged 5 to 73, who had died from Covid-19 in the US. While Covid-19 is primarily a respiratory disease, it has been estimated a third of patients have neurological symptoms.

"The most common severe neurological effects, stroke and encephalitis, can have life-changing implications, especially for someone who is young and previously healthy," Helen says.

Helen's involvement was because of her expertise in dealing with the olfactory bulb, the tiny part of the brain that enables us to smell.



It's the only part of the brain connected, via the nose, to the outside world, making it vulnerable to pollutants and viruses. She'd already done another project with the NIH to investigate the role of the olfactory bulb in Alzheimer's disease, another disease involving loss of smell.

Many of the world's brain banks do not routinely collect olfactory bulbs, so Helen developed specialised skill in handling and examining that part of the brain tissue. Working from her Botany home during lockdown, she analysed the brain scans in high-resolution microscopic detail. "I had never seen changes as severe as these in the olfactory bulb."

Full story: [auckland.ac.nz/helen-murray-research](https://auckland.ac.nz/helen-murray-research)

Dr Helen Murray from the Centre for Brain Research.





## KAURI FIGHTBACK

—  
Kauri with thinning  
canopies.  
Photo: Julia Jakobsson

Progress is being made in the fight against kauri dieback. **Anthony Doesburg** meets researchers at the University determined to help save the mighty native conifer.

**T**here are green shoots of hope in the effort to save New Zealand's majestic kauri tree, over which a pall was cast when kauri dieback disease began making headlines about 15 years ago.

Since that time, researchers, including many at the University of Auckland, have been trying to understand how the disease spreads and what can be done to save infected trees. They've made progress discovering that just a pinhead-sized quantity of soil containing spores of the water mould *Phytophthora agathidicida* carried on footwear is enough to fatally infect a tree.

Serious money and brainpower are now being thrown at the devastating problem. To the public, the crisis was brought home

in aerial photographs showing the stark bare boughs of once-leafy forest giants. And the loss was made personal when dozens of walking tracks through bush where kauri grow were made off-limits. Not everyone has accepted those strictures, with Auckland Council prosecuting one repeat Waitākere Ranges offender and issuing trespass notices against numerous others.

According to Associate Professor Bruce Burns of the University's School of Biological Sciences, cause for optimism about the future of kauri, a conifer unique to New Zealand, can be seen in steps such as the reopening of three popular walks in the Waitākeres' Karamatura Valley, near Huia. There are also positive results from the chemical treatment of infected trees. A further piece of good news is the release of funding for the Ngā Rākau Taketake (NRT) – Saving Our Iconic Trees research programme that will assess not only how kauri dieback is changing forest ecology but also its economic and social effects.

Associate Professor Luitgard Schwendenmann from the University's School of Environment is co-leading the NRT Risk Assessment and Ecosystem Impacts theme, which includes research by Bruce and others, including PhD candidates Shannon Hunter and Toby Elliott. This new effort seeks to move beyond more operational priorities carried out to date aimed at containment of the disease.

A June 2020 Ministry for Primary Industries map shows its inexorable spread, with hotspots of red signifying infection in kauri stands from Waipoua Forest in the north, home of the country's most famous specimen, 1,250-years-plus-old Tāne Mahuta with its 15-metre girth, to the Coromandel Peninsula in the south, and including Great Barrier Island.

Great Barrier Island was the site of the first reported outbreak of the disease in 1972. But Bruce who, like Luitgard, has been studying the disease for more than a decade, says it is thought to have been in the country much longer than that.

"The current thinking is that it has been here since the end of the Second World War," he says. "The hypothesis is that it came from the



PhD student Shannon Hunter is helping save kauri forests.





Associate Professor Bruce Burns next to a kauri with gummosis, the oozing of resin when the tree is under stress.  
Photo: Elise Manahan

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**“I saw large kauri that are now standing corpses. It is quite devastating to see the impact a microscopic organism has on these forest giants.”** – Shannon Hunter, PhD student, School of Environment

Malaya-Pacific area on earthmoving machinery that was sent there in the war and that was brought back and deployed during logging or other work in Waipoua and the Waitākeres. Those are the two areas in which we know the disease is quite prevalent.

“We also know that seedlings from a Waipoua kauri nursery operating in the 1950s and 1960s were sent all over the upper North Island, including to Great Barrier. It hasn’t been proven that this is what happened, but it does seem logical. The disease has actually been with us for decades, at a low level of detectability.”

Shannon who, with support from the George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment, has embarked on a PhD on kauri-dieback control methods, says her first task is to understand *Phytophthora agathidicida*’s basic biology.

“I feel very lucky to be able to research something that is important to many Kiwis, myself included, and I hope that my research will have some direct management outcomes that can help save kauri. Kauri is a keystone species that influences the species composition around it in forests so if we lose kauri, the whole forest dynamic is likely to change.”

She is hopeful her work will contribute to identifying a chemical treatment that would deactivate *Phytophthora agathidicida* in soil.

“This could have the potential to be used in

combination with Mātauranga Māori [Māori knowledge] and cultural control methods in nurseries and cleaning stations.”

Visiting Tāne Mahuta and the other enormous kauri in the Far North put into perspective for her how iconic and unique the trees are to New Zealand. However, a recent visit to Northland’s Trounson Kauri Park after a gap of some years also brought home the impact of the disease.

“I saw large kauri that are now standing corpses. It is quite devastating to see the impact a microscopic organism has on these forest giants in a relatively short time frame.”

Toby, who is also commencing a PhD this year, is focusing on the prediction of long-term

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Associate Professor Luitgard Schwendenmann is part of an effort to move beyond operational priorities and into containment of kauri dieback disease.  
Photo: Elise Manahan







School of Environment researchers analyse plant, soil and water characteristics in a kauri forest affected by dieback. Photo: Beate Michalzik

## GIFTS TO ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH

The George Mason Centre for the Natural Environment was established in 2016 with a transformative gift of \$5 million from retired scientist and alumnus George Mason. It is a multi-disciplinary research centre based in the Faculty of Science that focuses on environmental restoration, conservation and sustainability. George Mason recently gave \$270,000 for kauri dieback research at the Centre. The Freemasons Foundation has also given \$198,000 to support this research. For more information: [auckland.ac.nz/giving](http://auckland.ac.nz/giving)

kauri survival in the face of dieback disease and climate change.

“My research will involve collecting data on the growth, mortality and reproductive rates of kauri in the absence of kauri dieback and in current climate conditions and then assess the effects of dieback and climate change on these population measurements,” Toby says.

Like Shannon, he despairs of people ignoring local authorities’ control efforts.

“These are in place to limit the spread of kauri dieback and buy researchers time to develop better measures to protect kauri and for upgrading tracks to minimise the risk of the disease being spread to or from these sites.

“People need to realise the value of kauri as a taonga species, the fact that less than one percent of original kauri forests remain and the potential threat that this disease has to the long-term survival of the species.”

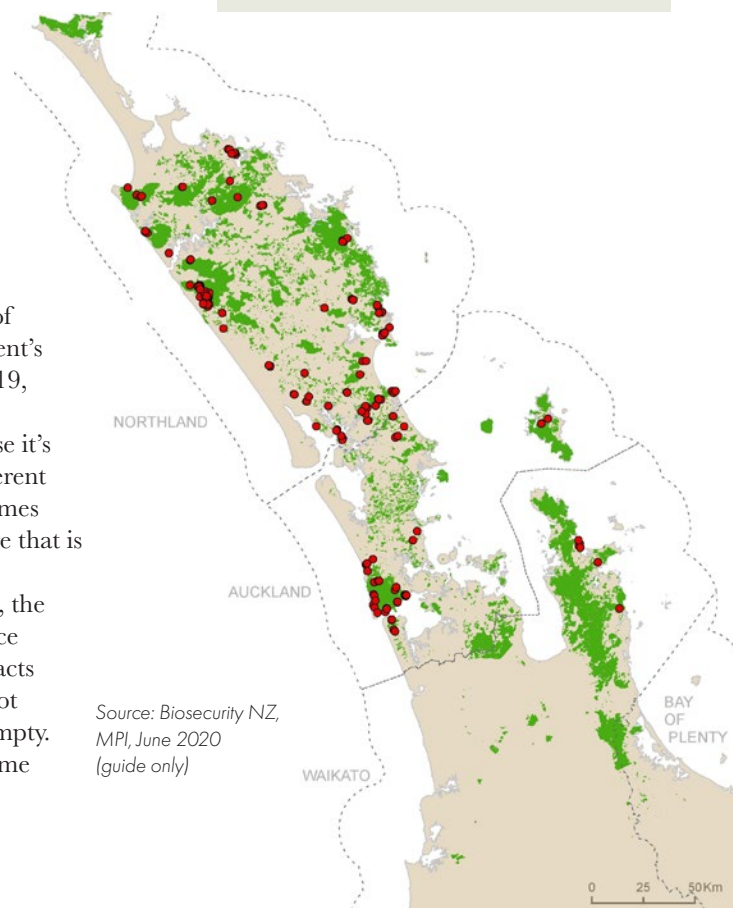
Getting buy-in to prevent the spread of kauri dieback is not unlike the government’s calls for co-operation in curbing Covid-19, Luitgard says. “We often refer to Covid because we have similar issues. We realise it’s partly communication; people have different values, different beliefs. Sometimes it comes down to communication through signage that is not effective.”

The longer kauri are kept disease-free, the better the chance of finding a cure, Bruce says. “This is not an acute organism. It acts over a long period of time, so death is not instantaneous. And our toolbox is not empty. For example, it’s been shown that the same

phosphorous acid treatment given to avocado trees for root rot reverses the symptoms of kauri dieback. The question is whether that’s a solution we can apply to thousands of hectares of wild forest.” ■

### Phytophthora agathidicida (PA)

- PA positive
- Kauri distribution – natural range
- Regions



Source: Biosecurity NZ, MPI, June 2020 (guide only)



# TIPS ... TO HIT YOUR EXERCISE GOALS

How can we fit in exercise in busy times, challenging circumstances or when motivation lacks? Dr David Moreau has some ideas and the good news is all you need is ten minutes a day.



**1 Have a routine** Although exercise has an immediate impact on the brain, short-term effects subside quickly. For its impact to last, exercise needs to be embedded within a routine, preferably daily or at least multiple times a week. Mornings work well for some; others prefer midday breaks or evenings. Time of day does not matter much – the most important thing is to implement a regular habit. After as little as a few weeks, tangible changes will appear, with a long-lasting impact on brain and cognitive functions.

**2 Embrace diversity** Routine is key, but once established the downside is often lassitude. Exercise can become a drag and motivation hard to find. This is where the power of variety is key – having a number of options often makes for a routine you look forward to, rather than one that is dreaded. For example, online workouts provide great options to stay motivated when getting outside isn't that enticing. More traditional outdoor alternatives can also help keep motivation intact; whether it is running, cycling, swimming, team sports or online workouts, make sure there's enough variety to keep exercise fun and engaging no matter the circumstances.

**3 Leverage HIT** One important new development in exercise research is the growing evidence for high-intensity training (HIT) as a way to maximise workout efficiency and profoundly impact the brain. Interleaving intense bursts of exercise (e.g. 20-30 seconds) with short periods of rest (30-40 seconds) allows for workouts that can not only be squeezed into a busy schedule, but also provides benefits on a par with those of longer forms of exercise. HIT is suited to indoor settings – with a virtual or in-person instructor – as well as outdoor environments. For example, try alternating sprints with recovery time throughout a Sunday run. As little as ten minutes a day for a few weeks is enough to see lasting physiological and cognitive benefits. Don't hold back – pace it up!

**4 Enrich your workout** One key element for exercise to have an even more profound impact on the brain is to make sure workouts are cognitively challenging. For example, activities that involve opponents and teammates force us to adapt to ever-changing environments in a process that is very beneficial to our brains. Challenges can also come from constraints you impose on yourself – from learning new workout routines to mastering new motor skills.

**5 Measure your progress** New technologies such as smart watches and fitness trackers make it easy to gather information about yourself and your progress. This data can be very valuable to quantify the benefits of any exercise programme and maintain motivation over time. Watch your resting heart rate or your blood pressure going down as you commit to a programme, and witness the impact on weight or sleep quality too. These devices can also be handy when targeting specific exercise intensities (e.g. HIT) to make sure you stay within a pre-defined target zone.

**6 Include others** Social interactions benefit the brain in numerous ways, through cognitively challenging and rewarding interactions. Exercise can be an excellent way to build a healthy social life, from regular meet-ups with workout buddies to new acquaintances and friends forged through team events. No matter the circumstances, the social aspect of exercise should not be overlooked – and group fitness classes often have online alternatives when going to a local gym is not an option.

**7 Manage your recovery** Finally, the most important benefits of exercise are not immediate and require committing to a routine for a sustained period of time. To enable long-term commitment, it's important to manage your rest and recovery. This includes sleep, of course, but not only. Make sure you schedule lighter sessions, including stretching and very low-intensity exercise, to facilitate long-term habits that are enjoyable and sustainable. With a focus on recovery comes a number of variables to attend to, from sleep to nutrition, mindfulness and relaxation. Ultimately, exercise can become the first step towards deeper personal care, and can encourage other holistic changes that have potent long-term effects.

Dr David Moreau is a cognitive neuroscientist in the Faculty of Science, where he leads the Brain Dynamics Lab. More information: [braindynamicslab.com](http://braindynamicslab.com)

# ARE WE A MORE COHESIVE SOCIETY BECAUSE OF COVID-19?

Three Auckland academics ponder the positive or negative impact of Covid-19 on the “team of five million”.

What do you think? Have your say.  
Facebook: UoAAlumni  
Twitter: @AucklandAlumni  
Email: ingenio@auckland.ac.nz

*The writers' views reflect personal opinions and may not be those of the University of Auckland.*



## FOUNDATIONS LAID LONG AGO

Collin Tukuitonga

Despite dramatic shifts in national priorities and the gap in wealth that is increasing over time, New Zealand continues to value community and the needs of the group over personal and individual benefit. Most citizens believe in supporting the most vulnerable members of society and sharing the cost of doing so.

It could be said resurgence of te reo Māori and influence of Māori values has helped consolidate the importance of community and the well-being of whānau and the collective over individualism and private value.

The public health threat of Covid-19 and knowledge of the catastrophic impact of the pandemic on other countries has further reinforced this shared commitment to supporting the well-being of the larger group.

Most people have been willing to safeguard the wider community by practising well-publicised public health measures such as social distancing, coughing etiquette and home isolation when advised. Clear messages of kindness for one another from the Prime Minister have helped secure this adherence to public health advice and increased our sense of social unity.

So, in short, I do believe we are a more cohesive society because of Covid-19.

That we can say this should really come as no surprise. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, New Zealand was described as the “social laboratory of the world” for liberal reforms that eventually led to the Social Security Act of 1938.

This Act, with its free healthcare and welfare benefits, was the first social security system in the world and protected New Zealand citizens ‘from the cradle to the grave’.

A survey for the Royal Commission on Social Policy in 1987 revealed most of the population was happy to pay taxes that supported communal health, education and welfare.

The same survey indicated the belief that looking after the next generation is a joint responsibility between parents and society, with taxes paid to help bring up children we collectively want and need.

It is onto these foundations of traditional New Zealand values that our response to Covid-19 has landed, adding unity and strength and creating a more cohesive society.

*Dr Collin Tukuitonga, Associate Dean Pacific,  
Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences*





## ON A BENEFIT, SO NOT PART OF THE TEAM

Louise Humpage

New Zealand is not a more cohesive society as a result of Covid-19, because our benefit policies have strengthened existing inequalities.

The government responded to significant job losses because of Covid-19 with a new payment that actively discriminates against people who received a benefit prior to the pandemic. The Covid-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP) is paid at \$490 a week tax-free (if an individual was in full-time work) for 12 weeks and without reductions if a partner's income is below \$2,000 a week or if the individual has accumulated assets.

In contrast, the existing Job Seeker Support was \$250 a week before tax for a single person over 25 when CIRP was introduced, with other sources of income immediately reducing the payment.

This policy ignored recommendations made by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group to significantly increase main benefits to reduce material hardship and suggested CIRP recipients were more 'deserving' than other unemployed people.

My recent interview research found existing benefit recipients described CIRP as "a kick in the gut", "a slap in the face", an "insult" and proof that benefit recipients are not considered "part of the team of five million".

Inadequate core benefit rates matter because women, many responsible for children, are more likely to become unemployed because they work in industries most affected by the pandemic. Yet the Labour Government's 'shovel ready' projects, aiming to stimulate jobs in the construction, forestry, electricity, gas, water and waste industries, favour male workers.

Higher rates of unemployment are also common in industries with a disproportionate number of Māori and Pacific workers, yet we have seen little interest in culturally specific stimulus packages.

My interview participants described life on a benefit as a "daily grind" that is "soul destroying", makes them "feel like shit" and destroys their mental health.

This is what those newly unemployed women, Māori and Pacific peoples face once they have completed their 12 weeks on CIRP. Instead of sharing the burden of Covid-19, our policies have thus increased the load on those already disadvantaged by existing gender and ethnic discrimination.

*Associate Professor Louise Humpage, Sociology, Faculty of Arts*



## MORE COHESION, MORE INEQUALITY

Dylan Asafo

Aotearoa New Zealand appears to be a more cohesive society because of Covid-19. But this 'cohesion' isn't a good thing, especially in a deeply unequal settler-colonial state like this one.

Pseudo-collectivist rhetoric such as "the team of five million" was, and still is, effective in encouraging nationwide compliance with stay-at-home orders to stop the spread of Covid-19. However, it also paves over the fundamental colonial cracks in this country, making it harder for those major divisions to be identified and reckoned with. The warm calls for unity and the continuous global praise make it hard to scrutinise and prevent state actions that fail to address the disproportionate impacts of Covid-19 on Māori, Pacific and other marginalised communities. These include, but are not limited to, the government's two-tiered benefit system that punishes beneficiaries, and its wage subsidy scheme that allowed some businesses to remain hugely profitable despite large-scale redundancies.

Furthermore, due to its widely praised public health response, the Labour-led Government was able to gain more support than ever in the 2020 election. Former National and New Zealand First voters, concerned with their parties' incompetence and lured by the government's relative competence and their increasingly conservative, neoliberal policies, gave their votes to Labour to give it an unprecedented mandate in Parliament. So while Covid-19 made Aotearoa look like "the team of five million", an equity-focused lens would find that the only area 'cohesion' has increased is among our wealthy, Pākehā-majority conservatives, thus allowing a settler-colonial government to further consolidate its power. As a consequence, pre-existing, deficient institutions in our welfare, health, housing, education and criminal justice systems continue to fail our most vulnerable.

True societal cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand can be achieved only by the state honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi through constitutional transformation. At the very least, true cohesion demands the return of stolen land to tangata whenua and a significant redistribution of wealth from our wealthiest 10 percent, who own 59 percent of all the country's assets, to the poorest 50 percent who only own two percent.

Covid-19 is unlikely to be a factor in making this happen. Only the will of the people can.

*Dylan Asafo, Lecturer, Faculty of Law*

**"Inadequate core benefit rates matter because women are more likely to become unemployed because they work in industries most affected by the pandemic."**



Colin and his wife Paula travelled seven continents together. Sadly, Paula passed away in February 2021.

# Colin Green: a career in focus

As an undergraduate, Colin Green was not the most notable of scholars. By his own description, his early academic life was a complete disaster. He tells **Geraldine Johns** had it not been for one particular professor, his career path could have been very different.

**E**meritus Professor Colin Green is a man with many hats: researcher, inventor, scientist, multi-skilled multi-tasker, sports-car enthusiast, businessman and entrepreneur.

Colin has earned local and international recognition for his pioneering research work in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University, where he has supervised more than 50 postgraduate students, as well as in institutions abroad.

In an academic sense, he has made his name as a cell and molecular biologist whose research is in gap junction channel modulation, in vivo cell programming and cancer therapy.

It was the late Dame Professor Patricia Bergquist who turned on his academic lights when Colin was in his third year of a BSc.

“She said to me one day that if I wanted to do a masters, she had a project that needed doing. She said I’d never go very far, because my undergraduate grades weren’t particularly good, but she would guarantee I’d get a masters.

“She was right – I got my masters [in developmental biology using electron microscopy] – but she was wrong in that I kept going.”

He would go on to do his PhD with Dame Patricia, and late Emeritus Professor Stan Bullivant.

The Bergquist boost would mark the start of 40-plus years in research. After stints in universities overseas – France, the US and England – he returned to the University of Auckland, where he established the Biomedical Imaging Research Unit in what was then called the Department of Anatomy with Radiology.

In 2005, Colin became the inaugural W & B Hadden Chair of Ophthalmology and Translational Vision Research, a position he held until 2020. It was a dream role, he says, because it enabled him to focus entirely on research and then target his findings to where there was a very real need. It is his research into wound healing, particularly in the cornea, that has earned him international acclaim.

It wasn’t always a smooth ride.

“When I started doing research translation 20 years ago, some colleagues got quite annoyed with me. They didn’t feel this was what a university was for, whereas I’ve always felt strongly that it’s funded by the taxpayer and we have an obligation, if we make a discovery, to do something about it. That change has been very positive.”

On the commercial side, he has established biopharmaceutical companies both here and overseas, among them CoDa Therapeutics – a world leader in new treatments for ocular disease. He is chief scientist of OcuNexus Therapeutics and InflammX Therapeutics – both in the United States. He has also worked closely with



**“As a scientist, this was probably one of the most exciting parts of my career: gowning up, going into the operating theatre, handing your drug to the ophthalmologist, and watching it go into this guy’s eye.”** – Emeritus Professor Colin Green

the commercialisation arm of the University, UniServices, on a number of technologies along the way.

Right now, Colin has five patented new compounds in various phases of clinical trial. One of them – Nexagon® – is in its final trials, and very close to market. And here marks a key moment in his career.

It started the day Auckland ophthalmologist Sue Ormonde called and told him about a man at risk of permanently losing his sight after a workplace accident. The man’s eye had been shot with liquid concrete after the pipe carrying it exploded.

“We were developing Nexagon [a topical compound] and we’d found it was working in the eye. Sue contacted MedSafe and they gave her the go-ahead [to use Nexagon].”

Colin was then called upon to literally deliver on his laboratory promise.

“For me, as a scientist, this was probably one of the most exciting parts of my career: gowning up, going into the operating theatre, handing your drug to the ophthalmologist, and watching it go into this guy’s eye.

“The next morning Sue rang me and said, ‘The inflammation’s going down and the eye is starting to heal.’ He’d had no healing nine days prior to that.

“So that night I went to bed and gazed at the ceiling with a smile on my face.

“That’s what science is about, and very few scientists get to experience that. We’re all building a brick in the wall – but to actually get to the top of a wall and put your product in a patient and save their eyesight ...”

Colin is the first in his family to go to university. He grew up in Mt Maunganui – then a small place. He talks of coming from a background where “if the lawnmower broke down, we had to fix it, and if the bicycle broke down, we had to fix it”.

On leaving school, he first worked for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in Lower Hutt, but lasted just six weeks before the boredom beat him. That’s when he decided to enrol at the University of Auckland and so began the road to his illustrious career, although he wouldn’t describe it that way, such is his humility at his achievements.

When he decided to take early retirement in 2020, it was, in part, to do with wanting to continue a life of adventure and travel with



his wife, Paula. Paula went along with Colin’s passion for cars – he’s a fan of Formula One, and they were members of the Porsche club and the Red Car Club, with friends driving similar cars on trips away.

Unfortunately, Paula passed away in February this year. Before she died, she and Colin had a wonderful three-month road trip through New Zealand, meeting friends and family, gathering more memories to add to those of the seven continents they had already travelled together.

He may have officially retired from his role as Chair of Ophthalmology, but Colin does not seem to have left the building.

“I can still wander in and out,” he says. “I still have quite a number of projects going, both in the ocular space and also in multiple sclerosis. We have a brain glioma [tumour] study we’re writing up, and I’m working with groups in the Department of Surgery looking at organ failure and lung ventilation, and that work is going extremely well.”

The flame that was lit almost half a century ago still blazes.

“I’m keen to keep the research projects going. It’s something that still excites me.” ■

*Professor Colin Green with one of his favourite sports cars.*

# A LIFETIME OF LEARNING

**“I have always tried to keep an open mind to new learnings and doings, and I believe that has paid off.”**

– Golden Graduate  
Gae Griffiths

Gae Griffiths tells **Danelle Clayton** that everyone has something about them that is truly outstanding.

**G**ae Griffiths has just excused herself from the audience of a U3A lecture to chat down the phone about her prominent career in education.

The topic of the University of the Third Age lecture is dementia and nurturing the ageing mind, although 81-year-old Gae is sharp as a tack. The former headmistress of Epsom Girls Grammar School (1979 to 1988) is usually to be found in an Auckland retirement village, but today she is busy travelling the South Island, squeezing in a lecture and an interview.

Learning, travelling and discovering are all lifelong passions she pursues more than 30 years after retiring from her headmistress role.

“I have always tried to keep an open mind to new learnings and doings, and I believe that has paid off,” Gae says.

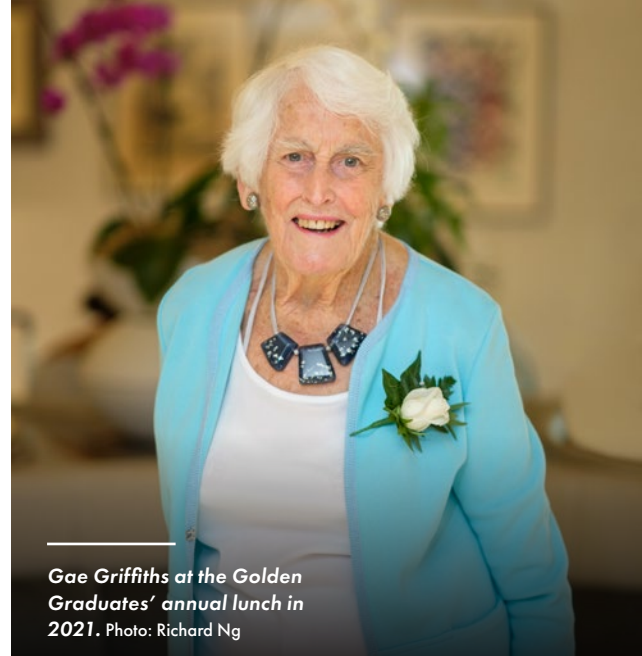
After teaching for around a decade here and in England, Gae (Master of Arts, 1970) moved into a career in secondary school teaching. She came to discover the best and worst of our education system as a school inspector and liaison officer with the then Department of Education.

In 1979, she was appointed headmistress of one of New Zealand’s largest girls’ schools, a chance to put into practice what she had learned.

Gae says she capitalised on the strengths of the well-established school and opened up opportunities for both staff and students to embrace change. Those involved with the school will recognise that the EGGGS library is named in her honour (the Gae Griffiths Library), as is a prize for all-round excellence in Years 9, 10 and 11 (the Gae Griffiths Prize).

“There are more opportunities than ever to get involved in the arts, music, sport and community work. The school has become much more multicultural, which is excellent. It’s a super school and I’m very proud of its achievements.”

Challenged not to remain ‘a dinosaur’, after her time as headmistress, Gae joined the new Ministry of Education, just four days after it came into being in October 1989. “It was the



Gae Griffiths at the Golden Graduates’ annual lunch in 2021. Photo: Richard Ng

beginning of ‘Tomorrow’s Schools’, and that threw enormous challenges to the small team of us attempting to give helpful direction to the many confused principals and boards in that new environment,” she recalls. “It was a baptism of fire and in the end it had pluses and minuses. It has opened up a world of opportunities in our schools, but I think we can see certain communities have it much easier than others do.”

From 1989-2000, Gae served on the University of Auckland Council, (Pro-Chancellor 1992-1993), and was part of the original Alumni Association.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the University Council. One of the most satisfying things was to see academic personnel rising through the ranks from lecturers with real promise to professors of international renown.”

The Alumni Association helped to introduce the concepts of philanthropic funding and informal graduation celebrations to the University in the early 1990s.

“The big universities overseas had huge endowments and philanthropists ploughing money into them. We knew that was what universities in New Zealand had to do.

“We began with friend-raising rather than fundraising. A major spinoff from our early work was the establishment of graduation events on the lawn outside Old Government House. Such functions have gone from strength to strength.”

Around the same period, Gae was appointed to the National Health Committee and the Health Research Council and later volunteered with Citizens Advice Bureau. In 2001, she became an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to education.

Her greatest privilege, she says, has always been working with young people.

“Today’s young people are extremely capable, interesting, challenging and lovely to work with. One thing I have learned and firmly believe is that everybody has something about them that is truly outstanding.”

## GOLDEN GRADUATES

Our Golden Graduates are those who graduated from the University of Auckland 50 or more years ago, along with graduates aged 70 and over.



Professor Brian Boyd  
with Michelle Prasad, the  
recipient of the Brian Boyd  
First in Family Scholarship.  
Photo: Elise Manahan

## BOOST TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

A new scholarship to assist a student who is the first in their family to attend university has come about through the generosity of one of the University's most distinguished arts scholars. **Tess Redgrave** talks to Brian Boyd.

**W**hen Distinguished Professor Brian Boyd won New Zealand's top research honour, the Rutherford Medal, in November 2020, it was a triumph on several levels.

Above all, it was an acknowledgement of Brian's stellar academic career that has included world-leading scholarship on Russian-American writer Vladimir Nabokov. Brian also introduced evolutionary and cognitive perspectives on literature and art, linking the arts, humanities and sciences and authoring, among others, a groundbreaking book, *On the Origin of Stories*.

The medal win was also the first time the humanities had been included as a category in the New Zealand Royal Society Te Aparangi awards, with Brian the first recipient.

But as he received his medal and a cheque for \$100,000, the win was a small triumph in another way, too.

He knew he didn't need the prize money for his own research – "I have data already gathered to support the next six books I'm working on" – and decided this was a chance to help someone else.

"Especially a young student who might be capable of high achievement but is held back because of financial need."

As a result, the Brian Boyd First in Family Scholarship was offered for the first time this year. It awards up to \$8,000 over four years to a student from any discipline who is the first member of their immediate family to attend university and who, because of financial hardship, may not otherwise be able to undertake a university degree.

Brian's career is a good example of what

university can offer a keen and agile mind. Both his Irish parents left school aged 14 and immigrated to New Zealand from Belfast in 1957.

Brian grew up first at Foxton Beach and then Palmerston North. A driven, curious young child, he remembers compiling a long list of countries, their capitals and facts such as what they exported. Later, when he was in Form One (Year 7), he wrote a 140-page book on the history of flying (his father, as well as running a bookshop on Palmerston North's Broadway, was in the NZ Airforce).

"I always researched things deeply because I loved it, not because I had to," he says.

One of three children, Brian was the first and only one who chose to go to university, to Canterbury, helping fund his way there with holiday jobs such as hay-making. He went on to Toronto and a PhD on Vladimir Nabokov and joined the University of Auckland in 1980 as an English lecturer.

His career has spanned fiction, poetry, drama, non-fiction, film, and comics, and crossed times, places and forms. It has led to collaborations with professionals ranging from neuroscientists to philosophers, physicists and psychiatrists around the world, and to translations into languages from Arabic to Turkish.

Recently, he has been working on a biography of philosopher Karl Popper and often quotes him on freedom: "My idea of freedom is that thought is essentially creative and contributes to the creation of a future in every single person's life."

## INAUGURAL WINNER

The inaugural recipient of the Brian Boyd First in Family Scholarship is 18-year-old Michelle Prasad.

Michelle came to New Zealand from Fiji in 2018 and by 2020 was head girl at her high school, Edgewater College in Pakuranga. She and her sister are being raised by their mother.

Michelle says the scholarship is a weight off the whole family's mind.

"It's amazing what Brian has done. I'm doing a BCom/LLB and this is such a huge help."

Michelle is also doing good herself. She has set up a charity called the Good Start Foundation. "I want to help people who may not quite be academically strong enough to get a scholarship, but who could be helped into further study or an apprenticeship."

Brian says he's delighted to be able to assist someone with Michelle's personal qualities. "After meeting her and hearing what else she has done for others since submitting her application, I couldn't be happier with her getting the first award. She can go anywhere and she will give everything."

Read about Michelle:  
[auckland.ac.nz/michelle-prasad](http://auckland.ac.nz/michelle-prasad)



# AROUND THE GLOBE

Ingenio finds out what jobs have kept three alumni living overseas in a Covid-19 world. **By Anthony Doesburg**

## **KUMANAN RASANATHAN** *Phnom Penh, Cambodia*



While Covid-19 has disrupted everyone’s lives, it has utterly dominated Kumanan Rasanathan’s. Kumanan studied medicine, among other subjects, at the University of Auckland in the 1990s and early 2000s, and has been in the thick of the pandemic response in Cambodia, working with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

“It has been rewarding to contribute to a national response when there was so much fear and uncertainty at the beginning of the pandemic. But my public health career, in New Zealand and at the WHO and UNICEF, has mostly been on improving health service delivery and working across sectors on social determinants and health inequalities.”

Kumanan, who graduated in 1999 with a MBChB, a Bachelor of Human Biology and a Bachelor of Arts in Politics, returned to the University in 2003 to do a Master of Public Health. For the past three years he has been working in Phnom Penh and this year will take up a role at the WHO headquarters in Geneva.

“I was the WHO Covid-19 incident manager for much of the first half of 2020 and also led the health service delivery pillar. It’s been one of the most exhilarating, challenging and stressful periods of my career.”

The position involved him in everything from helping write Cambodia’s Covid-19 plan and clinical guidelines, to training health workers and mobilising funding and equipment.

Pandemic aside, Kumanan says the most exciting part of his job is seeing the tangible effects of policy change, which doesn’t always come easy. “I’ve been fortunate to work in a number of different countries, in teams of people with different professional and cultural backgrounds, and at different levels. For example, I’ve helped define global development frameworks in New York, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, and I’ve engaged with heads of government and heads of state.

“But probably most rewarding for me has been



*Public health specialist Dr Kumanan Rasanathan, far right, has been in the thick of the pandemic response in Cambodia.*

the privilege of learning from community health workers in villages in countries as diverse as Cambodia, Liberia and Nepal.”

The people of Cambodia were the best feature of life there. “They are the most hospitable people to foreigners in the world, in spite of all the challenges they’ve faced over the past few decades, including from the actions of foreign countries.”

And as it has a very child-centred society, his sons thrived there.

That’s not to say he’s escaped New Zealand’s gravitational pull.

“I think expatriate New Zealanders always consider returning home to try to make a contribution. I keep strong links with New Zealand, including with the School of Population Health at the University.

“Covid-19 did mean I prioritised spending some time in Aotearoa with family and worked remotely. I thought about pursuing a role here, but in the end it was hard to turn down the new position at the WHO headquarters. In the future, who knows?”

**“It has been a privilege to learn from community health workers in villages in countries as diverse as Cambodia, Liberia and Nepal.”**



## DEBBIE BARTLEY

*London, United Kingdom*

When Debbie Bartley set out on her career path in the 1960s, she broke new ground. Debbie was in Auckland Medical School's inaugural class in 1968, graduating in 1973. Then, to pursue her interest in public health – inspired by stints in the US, the African bush and Nepal – she applied for a training position in the UK's first community-medicine department at St Thomas's Hospital Medical School in London.

“When I graduated, my specialty of public health – or community medicine, as it was known then – barely existed. Some of the faculty had discussed concepts like population health, inequalities and political determinants of health, but it was much less common at that time.”

One lecturer showed slides of his work in the Himalayas with Sir Edmund Hillary and the Himalayan Trust, sparking Debbie to go to Nepal. While working near Kathmandu, she was introduced to Sir Ed. She ended up flying with him to the Everest region and stayed for a month in mid winter to run the trust's Kunde Hospital. That association with Nepal saw her take charge, years later, of the Covid-19 response in Taplejung District, near the Tibetan border.

“We sent PPE and supplies, taking five days by Jeep and porters. We set up advice lines for villagers, facilitated hospital referrals and liaised with partners dealing with contact tracing.”

Nepal, with 30 million people, has weathered the pandemic comparatively well, so far. Deaths were in the low 3,000s up to the end of April.

Debbie has worked mostly in the UK, where



Debbie Bartley working in Samoa, post-tsunami in 2009, and today (below).

her proudest achievement was being made Director of Public Health for North West Surrey.

“I also enjoyed my commission with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which advises UK health departments, and a fellowship with the WHO Collaborating Centre at Imperial College, London.”

Past roles include helping set up Biobank Qatar in Doha and working on disaster relief in Samoa after the September 2009 tsunami. She lives on London's Southbank and is a trustee and health lead for the Himalayan Trust UK, running a health programme for 9,600 villagers in Taplejung, and she sees the effect on villagers' lives. “Many mothers and babies had died in one village the decade before we started. We helped the people build a new clinic and birthing centre, and establish a fund for maternity emergencies. All mothers and babies have been safe since.”

She has also turned her mind to a masters equivalent in Tibetan philosophy. The guidance she would offer is not to head in one direction just because you feel you should.

“Try to recognise and explore the quiet idea in your mind. Take lots of career breaks if you want to. The unexpected may happen.”



**“Try to recognise and explore the quiet idea in your mind.”**

## DANIEL CAMPBELL

*Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Caribbean*

Appreciation for sustainability assures Daniel Campbell (Master of Engineering, 2018) of a busy future. Daniel is from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, an archipelago in the Eastern Caribbean. He returned there after finishing his studies and is working as an environmental sustainability consultant, responsible for technical development, management and execution of complex large-scale projects.

“The Caribbean is one of the most disaster-prone and vulnerable regions in the world. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we are faced with multiple hazards ranging from hurricanes and tropical storms, floods, landslides and drought to seismic events and volcanic eruptions.”

He felt the tragic consequences of such an event in 2008, when his girlfriend's aunt was killed in a landslide along the coastal highway of mainland St Vincent. Despite the cause being sheeted home to engineering and construction failings, under Saint Vincent and the Grenadines law, no one was held to account.

“One of the reasons I studied at Auckland

was because New Zealand does a great job at managing similar disasters while pursuing a path of sustainable development.

“The most exciting aspect of my work is being able to develop and implement projects that will improve people's lives by reducing the risk of severe damage from disasters, while preserving the environment and ecosystems.”

Not that life is all about bracing for catastrophe. “The best parts of living here are the rivers and beaches, lush mountainous forests and vibrant culture, spread across 32 islands and cays, and local traditions mixed with moderately progressing infrastructure development.”

He feels personally motivated to lift professional standards.

“The engineering profession is not regulated here and I intend to help change that in the future.”

Daniel Campbell in his office.



**“The most exciting aspect is implementing projects to improve people's lives.”**

In 2020, the annual Distinguished Alumni Awards (DAA) ceremony was deferred because of Covid-19. The four outstanding alumni named in 2020 are being honoured, together with an additional awardee, at a new-look event on 29 May. The DAA celebration has been renamed Taumata to reflect the University's new name in Māori, Waipapa Taumata Rau, which means Waipapa, place of many peaks.

Make a nomination for the 2022 Distinguished Alumni Awards at [auckland.ac.nz/daa](http://auckland.ac.nz/daa)



Photo: Helen Bankers

## COURTNEY SINA MEREDITH (YOUNG ALUMNA OF THE YEAR)

BA, English and Political Studies, 2010

Author Courtney Sina Meredith is director of Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust and has been selected for many international writers' residencies, including the prestigious Fall Residency at the University of Iowa where she is an Honorary Fellow in Writing. Courtney is the author of a play, *Rushing Dolls* (2010); poetry collection *Brown Girls in Bright Red Lipstick* (2012); a short-story collection, *Tail of the Taniwha* (2016); an historical children's book *The Adventures of Tupaia* (2019); and a new poetry collection, *Burst Kisses on the Actual Wind* (2021).

**Greatest achievement:** "The love of my stepsons; family is my spiritual anchor. And professionally, it's being able to spend my days working in the arts with inspiring people whom I truly believe in." (Story, pg 41.)

## JEREMY SALMOND

Master of Architecture, 1983

Jeremy Salmond, QSO, is the founding director of Salmond Reed Architects, and an award-winning architect who specialises in the conservation of historic buildings.

**Greatest achievement:** "The restoration of the Auckland Jewish Synagogue. It was hugely important to me because I didn't expect to be given the entire job to do. I was working with another design architect, but in the end he was less interested in the old building so I ended up doing all that and it was a wonderful experience ... just wonderful." (Story, pg 37.)

## DAME HELEN WINKELMANN

BA/LLB, 1987

Dame Helen became Chief Justice of New Zealand in March 2019, the second alumna to hold the position (Dame Sian Elias, her predecessor, was the first). Prior to the role, she was a judge in the Court of Appeal for four years, part of the first all-female bench in Court of Appeal history. Earlier, she was appointed a High Court judge in 2004 and a Chief High Court judge in 2010.

See: [auckland.ac.nz/helen-winkelmann](http://auckland.ac.nz/helen-winkelmann)



## ANDREW GRANT

BE (Civil Engineering), 1989; Master of Politics, Philosophy and Economics (Oxford)

Andrew went to Onehunga High School. Since winning a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, he has had a career in sustainable economic development. He is a senior partner at McKinsey & Company, a global management consultancy that assists businesses, governments and the social sector to transform their organisations using technology and sustainable business practices.

**Greatest achievement:** "Professionally, I'm proud of the amazingly talented Kiwi business people and firms I've had the privilege of helping unleash on the global stage, where they have thrived. But I'm most proud of my amazing wife and five kids, who have been such an awesome team in giving me the opportunity to have had such a global life and career ... they now get to enjoy the wonder of living in New Zealand."



## ASHLEY BLOOMFIELD

BHB (1988), MBChB (1991), Master of Public Health, 1997

As Director-General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield steered New Zealand towards elimination of Covid-19. Ashley's career has included clinical work, public health medicine and non-communicable disease prevention and control. He has worked for the World Health Organisation in Geneva, and as director or chief executive of Capital and Coast, Hutt and Wairarapa district health boards, before taking roles at the Ministry of Health that led to his current position.

**Greatest achievement:** "Helping to protect New Zealanders from a 'one in 100 years' global pandemic."

See also: [auckland.ac.nz/ashley-q-and-a](http://auckland.ac.nz/ashley-q-and-a)



# SEEING A BETTER WAY

Heritage architect Jeremy Salmond's life has revolved around history and conservation.

**D**espite a distinguished career as a heritage architect, Jeremy Salmond is unassuming.

"In 2018, I was awarded the New Zealand Institute of Architects' Gold Medal. I was gobsmacked. Then I started to irritate people by being unduly modest about it, but I was just so surprised, that's all.

"Still, you can't ignore your peers' appreciation, so I accepted it and it's lovely."

Jeremy is the founding director of Salmond Reed Architects, the largest specialist heritage design office in New Zealand. In 2007, he was awarded the Queen's Service Order for his contribution to the preservation of New Zealand's heritage of significant buildings.

Jeremy says he's "not displeased" with his career. That includes being the driving force behind the full restoration and strengthening of the Auckland Jewish Synagogue on Princes Street, now home to Alumni Relations and Development. It was a huge job.

"I get very engaged with the details on jobs like that. I see all the possibilities of what has to be done. I often describe myself as a professional busybody ... I go into people's houses or buildings thinking, 'There must be a better way.'

"People think with restoration of old buildings that architects don't have to design anything, but it's very much about design. Any change you make has to be sympathetic to the building to fit."

Jeremy starts the restoration of an old building with a conservation plan, researching the building's history, who designed it, where the ideas came from and how it was made.

"We refer to buildings as documents; they're just full of information. They tell you stuff."

The concept of conservation spills into all areas of his life. He is married to renowned anthropologist Dame Anne Salmond and for more than 20 years the couple have been working on an ecological restoration project on their property near Gisborne.

"It's been life-changing for Anne and me to be able to do that. We go down there every month. We can't stop or the weeds will grow back!"

He attributes much of his career success to Anne, whom he met while they were students at the University. He was drawn to her guitar playing at a party. The Salmonds celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in February.

"Anne has been a wonderful asset to me. When



I wrote my thesis, she read every page and did the corrections. She actually transformed my ability to write."

His thesis was later published as *Old New Zealand Houses: 1800-1940*, a landmark publication now in its eighth edition. "Anne and I both deal a lot with ideas, and we talk these through, but she's hard to keep up with!"

Jeremy has been involved in the rehabilitation of many significant heritage buildings, including Auckland's Civic Theatre, the Pompallier Printing House in Russell, St Matthew-in-the-City Church in Auckland, Sacred Heart Cathedral in Wellington, the former Auckland Chief Post Office, Auckland Art Gallery and the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

"The funny thing is, sometimes you get very old buildings, many of which are pretty grungy, but they've still got something in them. And you might say, 'Well, it's not great architecture', but it's still worth doing because these buildings embody history and the lives of people who inhabited them. All our histories are layered."

He says not all architecture needs to be reinvented. "We didn't have to reinvent the Civic Theatre but it had been disregarded and changes had been made, such as flooring over some of the steps. It was also filthy. The roof space was half-full of pigeon crap, which is highly toxic and dangerous to human health.

"I worked with a large team of architects, engineers, contractors and the pigeon-poo removers, of course. They're all very skilful people. I'm not a one-man band."

A year on from when his award was announced, just before lockdown, Jeremy is looking forward to receiving the DAA in person at a ceremony. "It's wonderful to be recognised by your university in this way. I'm a design professional with a reputation for working with heritage buildings, not an academic. So it's a lovely endorsement." – Denise Montgomery

Distinguished alumnus Jeremy Salmond, QSO, with wife Dame Anne Salmond, who was awarded the Order of New Zealand in 2020. They've been married for 50 years. Photo: Elise Manahan



**The Mirror Book, Charlotte Grimshaw, Penguin Random House, \$38**

**Win:** We have two copies of *The Mirror Book* to give away. Just email: [ingenio@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ingenio@auckland.ac.nz) by 31 August.

# Charlotte Grimshaw: home truths

Charlotte Grimshaw is an award-winning author and alumna who has written seven novels and two short-story collections. She's also the daughter of another literary giant, C. K. Stead, and it's her family life on which she shines her torch in her powerful memoir *The Mirror Book*. **Janet McAllister** speaks to her about her most challenging work yet.

**W**e're both a little on edge. I'm nervous, because I'm interviewing one of the most important Pākehā writers working today. Charlotte Grimshaw is nervous, because shyness is one of her natural states.

We're extra tremulous because I'm here to ask about Charlotte's extraordinary new memoir *The Mirror Book*. The book evokes many traumas she's faced, including those stemming from her complex relationship with her mother, Kay, and her father, Karl – aka C.K. Stead, 88, Emeritus Professor of the University, another of the most important Pākehā writers working today.

we met, Charlotte's two sons had not finished reading it, but another young relative had written thanking her "for helping with understanding members of the family".

And her parents? They have read it, but in terms of its effects, just as with the French Revolution, it's too early to tell.

I'm a stranger in Charlotte's living room, asking her what it's like to talk about her crises to strangers in her living room ("It's very tricky," responds the meta writer to this meta question).

It's her trauma, yet she is the one working to put me at ease, kindly pouring me a second glass of water without being asked; asking where I will

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**"I've always been told I come across as 'frosty and aloof', but I don't feel like that at all."** – Charlotte Grimshaw

"I've never done anything so exposing before," says Charlotte. "It's nerve-racking. None of it has been an easy process."

She wrote the book for her family, "almost as an appeal for empathy, for understanding or acceptance". The paradox: this family trained in intimate observation – for literature's sake – does not discuss the personal in real life. They don't ring; instead they email. They don't sit down for a heart-to-heart face-to-face; instead they publish.

"If only they'd engaged in a little more conversation, I wouldn't have gone away and written the book," Charlotte jokes.

Her husband, Paul, has been immensely encouraging and urged her to publish ("we're close, he's a solid character, tough and sanguine"). Other figures in the book – her brother, her daughter – have also received it positively. When

he most comfortable for the interview, unwilling to reveal her own preference. (We end up on sofa seats below a Karl Maughan garden painting in her classically gorgeous Auckland villa. It's a pleasant space for a tricky conversation, and the crowded walls testify to the close relationship between New Zealand arts and letters.)

"I've always been told I come across as 'frosty and aloof', but I don't feel like that at all," Charlotte says.

Her actions and words throughout the hour are not frosty but generous; the 'aloof' reputation is probably because, between her frequent jokey asides, she wears the serious demeanour common among the shy.

She describes her conscientious young student self at the University's Law School 35 years ago as "spectacularly silent".

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## Review

Read alumna Dr Emma Espiner's review of *The Mirror Book* at [tinyurl.com/espiner-spinoff-review](http://tinyurl.com/espiner-spinoff-review)





“I was not an outgoing student,” she laughs, in understatement. “I never contributed in tutorials. I spent the whole time hiding, trying to melt into the background while at the same time finding it fantastically interesting.”

She was always drawn to the “human drama” of criminal law – and she uses this interest “in why people commit crime, in antisocial behaviour” in some of her fiction. Although she hasn’t practised law for decades, she’s pleased she studied it: “A law degree gives a good grounding and understanding in the way society works, everything from politics to the constitution of society.”

She did law to do something different from her family – but ended up getting a two-book deal by her late twenties, living in London with young children. Given the level of literary triumph her family was used to, did she realise what a massive achievement that was?

“Probably not,” she says. “I wouldn’t have been thrilled. I would have been focused and nervous about how to get it done.”

I ask what she does to relax. She responds with a quote from a midlife-crisis novel from fellow

famous literary offspring Martin Amis: “We are the unrelaxed.”

“The way I relax is usually with furious exercise to burn off being so unrelaxed,” she says. She walks her dog, Phillip, whose unwitting namesake is an Irish writer Charlotte once met at a literary festival.

Her long list of successes is stunning: seven novels, two short-story collections, the Montana Medal for fiction, the BNZ Katherine Mansfield Award, two-time Voyager Media Awards Reviewer of the Year... the list goes on. And so *The Mirror Book* is a compelling look behind-the-scenes of a pre-eminent literary family. But it’s also a remarkably relatable book – after gulping it down within 24 hours, I recommended it to several friends, because the feelings and attitudes Charlotte describes echo some of their own. A clinical psychologist even urged Charlotte to publish it.

“Since I think of the book as a bit of a plea for empathy and for treating each other better, I love the idea that people can relate to it,” says Charlotte. “Even better if it helps with understanding.”

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*Charlotte Grimshaw wears the serious demeanour common among the shy.*  
Photo: Elise Manahan

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**“I never contributed in tutorials. I spent the whole time hiding, trying to melt into the background while at the same time finding it fantastically interesting.”** – Charlotte Grimshaw, author

# Uncovering injustice

Dame Claudia Orange, distinguished alumna, is a renowned historian. She talks to Tess Redgrave about her ongoing commitment to social justice.

**“It is absolutely crucial that in some way we are our neighbour’s carer.”**

– Dame Claudia Orange, historian

Ask Dame Claudia Orange what has underpinned her decades-long scholarship on the Treaty of Waitangi and she recites her Catholic faith’s call to action: “See. Judge. Act”.

“I try to understand the issues. I assess what I can do and then I do something about it.

“I am committed to social justice,” she adds. “I’m aware that communities are not always equally balanced. Therefore it is absolutely crucial that in some way we are our neighbour’s carer.”

For 40 years, Dame Claudia has researched and written on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. She has delved deeply into the circumstances surrounding the signing in 1840, with groundbreaking research uncovering nine sheets of the Treaty and naming Māori signatories: who and where they were at the time. She has followed the Treaty as it has been interpreted, reinterpreted and evolved through successive governments, the Waitangi Tribunal, Treaty settlements, into the school curriculum and the creation in 2019 of Te Arawhiti, the office for Māori Crown Relations.

“Claudia Orange is an outstanding New Zealand historian,” says Associate Professor Aroha Harris, from the University’s Department of History. It was to this same department that a 30-year-old Claudia came in 1969, when she began her academic career as a ‘late starter’ and mother of three young children.

She enrolled in papers on colonial topics and wanted to study European colonial dominance in South East Asia. But when it came to her masters, adviser and leading New Zealand historian Keith Sinclair suggested she look at the Labour Government from 1935-49, a time when Claudia’s father, Monty Bell, had worked for the Gisborne Department of Māori Affairs.

Then, while on a research trip to Wellington, Claudia read a 1925 Labour Party paper proposing a Commission of Inquiry into Māori grievances.

It was an “eye-opener” and became the catalyst for her to embark on a PhD, “testing whether the Treaty of Waitangi was really the wonderful founding document many believed”.

She began her research combining it with three Māori language papers and support from Māori academics such as Ranginui Walker, Pat Hohepa and Sir Hugh Kāwharu. Soon she was listening to Māori voices that had signed

petitions in the 19th century and uncovering a narrative of injustice, land confiscation and marginalisation.

It took eight years to finish the PhD. “Keith Sinclair said it was the longest he’d supervised,” she laughs. It was another three years before Allen & Unwin published *The Treaty of Waitangi* in 1987.

In the years since, Claudia has been the general editor of the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* and a director of research at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. She is a DNZM OBE and became a Distinguished Alumna of her alma mater in 1997.

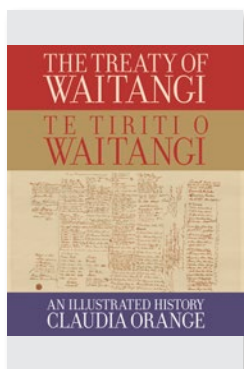
But she has kept her focus on the Treaty through several editions of her book. The latest, an illustrated history, brings the Treaty narrative up to date and tells a more hopeful story than the one she first found.

“The vision of two peoples, each in their own way together forming one nation, has been moved forward,” she writes. “But it still has a way to go: it still asks for solutions in the Māori-Crown relationship that are acceptable to all involved, Māori and other New Zealanders.”

The narrative of the Treaty will continue to unfold and Dame Claudia will be there “asking, judging and acting”.

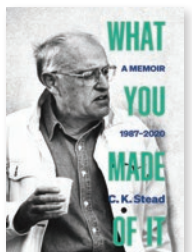
“I am not writing as Māori would about the same subject,” she says. “And that has kept me humble. You can never know it all.”

Dame Claudia Orange: always asking, judging and acting. Photo: Hagan Hopkins



Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi: Te Tiriti o Waitangi: An Illustrated History*, BWB, \$49.99





### What You Made of It: A Memoir 1987-2020

The third and final volume of C.K. Stead's memoir, from leaving the University to write full-time until today. Stead establishes his international reputation as novelist, poet and critic in a period when his fearless lucidity on matters literary and political embroil him in argument – from *The Bone People* to the Treaty.

**C.K. Stead, Auckland University Press, \$50**

**WIN: We have one copy to give away.**

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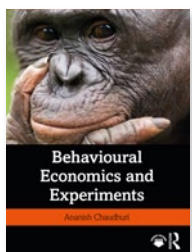
### Ngā Kete Mātauranga

Co-editor Linda Waimarie Nikora is Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University and also contributes an essay to this collection of writings by

24 Māori academics. Read more: **auckland.**

**ac.nz/ingenio-books-nikora**

**Linda Waimarie Nikora and Jacinta Ruru, OUP, \$60**



### Behavioural Economics and Experiments

Ananish Chaudhuri is Professor of Experimental Economics at the University. His book explores behavioural economics and questions around decision-making and human nature, with examples from literature, film, sport and neuroscience.

**Ananish Chaudhuri, Routledge, \$85**



### Cold Wallet: Locked, Loaded, Gone

A thriller by alumna Rosy Fenwicke, set in Auckland, Fiji and Corfu ... and the world of cryptocurrency.

**Rosy Fenwicke, Wonderful Word, \$36**



### Time to Make a Song and Dance: Cultural Revolt in Auckland in the 1960s

Murray Edmond is a retired associate professor of Arts at the University. His book explores a volatile period of change in Auckland's history, both socially and culturally, and provides a detailed insight into national figures of the time, including Janet Frame, Barry Crump and Frank Sargeson.

**Murray Edmond, Atanui Press, \$38**



### A Clear Dawn: New Asian Voices from Aotearoa New Zealand

This is the first-ever anthology of Asian New Zealand writing and the 75 writers included range from high-school students to retirees, from recent immigrants to writers whose families have lived in New Zealand for generations. Some, including Gregory Kan, Sharon Lam, Rose Lu and Chris Tse, have published books; others, like

Mustaq Missouri, Aiwa Pooamorn and Gemishka Chetty, are better known for theatre and performance. With its diverse voices, styles and points of view, *A Clear Dawn* explores the new literature of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Associate Professor Paula Morris who co-edits the collection, is a writer and director of the Master of Creative Writing programme at the University.

**Paula Morris and Alison Wong, eds, Auckland University Press, \$50**



## CREATIVE THINKER

Courtney Sina Meredith and the staff at Karangahape Road's Bestie Café greet each other like long-lost friends, blowing kisses and making comic heart-shapes with their hands when she arrives for our interview. I love her butterfly-dancing artistic genius, and the integrity, commitment and clear-eyed vision she brings to all her writing and performance, whether it's a children's book,

a bank ad or her stunning 2016 book of short stories, *Tail of the Taniwha*. The 35 year old uses this same genius and commitment in her everyday work, helming the Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust. Thanks in large part to Courtney's vision and huge efforts, Tautai is undergoing a renaissance, growing its staff in a bigger, brighter venue on the K Road strip.

In all her professional roles, Courtney – whose writing draws on her Samoan roots – is focused on putting Pacific women, women of colour, “at the centre of their own narratives”. Her poetry is part of every genre-bending piece she presents. Her first collection was in 2012 (*Brown Girls in Bright Red Lipstick*), but she recites verse in her Tautai speeches and uses it in funding applications. It opens her essay on endometriosis and chronic pain in *Life on Volcanoes*, a collection of essays I edited. In *The Adventures of Tupaia*, the book accompanying Auckland Museum's 2019 exhibition about the Tahitian *tahua* (tohunga) who journeyed to Aotearoa with Captain Cook, Courtney's inclusion of poetry is the product of profound thinking.

“I had to think and feel into him [Tupaia] a lot,” says the 2021 Young Alumna of the Year. “With no women in the story, putting a woman's voice on every page had to be the empowering part for me as a feminist.” The book was shortlisted in the 2020 NZ Book Awards for children and young adults and was the children's winner in the 2020 NZSA Heritage Book Awards. Courtney's new poetry book, *Burst Kisses on the Actual Wind*, was published in April.

She says her writing has changed recently, partly because she has fallen in love “with four people at once” – her partner, visual artist Janet Lilo, and Janet's three sons. Including Courtney's beloved dog Sadie Rose, it's a full household.

In-person, Courtney is a bright, generous, sparkling riposte to the ridiculous idea of genius as selfish curmudgeon. Genius once was, to quote Courtney's award-winning play script, a “rushing doll”. She is now an uplifting, sharp-thinking leader. – Janet McAllister

**Courtney Sina Meredith, *Burst Kisses on the Actual Wind*, Beatnik, \$30**

Courtney Sina Meredith.  
Photo: Janet Lilo



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## UPDATE YOUR DETAILS: BE IN TO WIN SAMSUNG GALAXY EARBUDS

Update your contact details to stay informed about University of Auckland news through our alumni publications and emails. You'll then be able to receive exclusive offers, competitions and information about events near you. If you update before 31 August 2021, you'll automatically go in the draw to win one of five pairs of Samsung Galaxy Earbuds. Visit: [alumni.auckland.ac.nz/update](https://alumni.auckland.ac.nz/update)

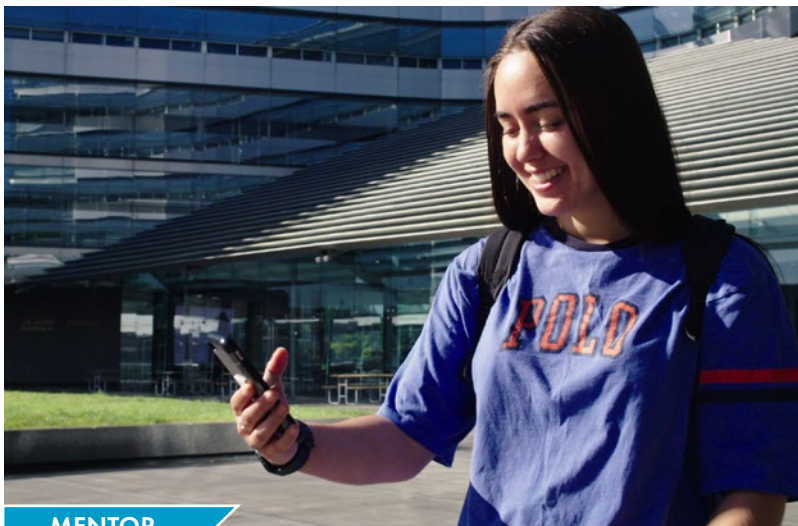


LISTEN

## PACIFIC SOUNDS

Fāgogo, a collection of Samoan fables, features as part of the University's Te Tumu Herenga Libraries and Learning Services Archive of Māori and Pacific Sound (AMPS). This archive of audio-visual recordings promotes knowledge and understanding of Māori and Pacific Peoples. The AMPS is currently being relocated and this is due to be completed mid-2021, so not everything is preserved in a digital format yet. But there are still plenty of stories at [fagogo.auckland.ac.nz](https://fagogo.auckland.ac.nz) or head to [auckland.ac.nz/library-AMPS](https://auckland.ac.nz/library-AMPS) to see what other audio treasures are available in the archive of Māori and Pacific Sound.





MENTOR

## 30 MINUTES A MONTH

The University's informal mentoring platform, Alumni Connect, now has more than 650 students registered who could use your help. Virtually share your career insights with current students and exchange industry advice with fellow alumni. Just 30 minutes a month can make a difference in a student's study experience and future career. Conjoint LLB/Arts student Caitlin Lorigan, pictured, is one of the students benefiting from having a mentor through the platform. For more information and to sign up, head to: [auckland.ac.nz/alumni-connect](https://auckland.ac.nz/alumni-connect)



NOMINATE

## WHO IS YOUR UNDER-40 STAR?

Each year, the University selects 40 alumni based on their demonstrated contributions to their community, their profession and the University across the six categories of Business Leaders, Entrepreneurs, Influencers, Disruptors and Innovators, Performers and Humanitarians. In 2020, many 40 Under 40 alumni then came together to give their career insights to students as part of the inaugural event, Accelerate Your Career (pictured). To find out more about who's eligible and to submit a 40 Under 40 nomination, go to: [auckland.ac.nz/40-under-40](https://auckland.ac.nz/40-under-40)



INSPIRE

## WORDS OF WISDOM

Every year, we invite alumni to share what they would have told their younger selves at graduation. Alumni quotes make it into fortune cookies that are given out during graduation to our new graduands. Inspire the graduating classes of 2021 by sharing a quote to brighten their special day. To share your words of wisdom, go to: [auckland.ac.nz/WoW](https://auckland.ac.nz/WoW)



VOLUNTEER

## TIME COSTS NOTHING

Our Volunteer Impact Week (VIW) runs during New Zealand National Volunteer Week, 20-26 June. VIW is a chance for alumni, staff, students and friends to give time to programmes and projects to benefit society. For our third VIW the theme is 'Hours for People and the Planet', 'Ko ngā hāora mō ngā Tangata me te Aorangi'. Whether it's helping to restore a natural habitat, mentoring students or supporting research activities, there are many ways to help. See: [alumni.auckland.ac.nz/VIW](https://alumni.auckland.ac.nz/VIW)

RAISING  
the BAR  
Auckland

HOME EDITION

WATCH

## ONLINE BAR

In 2020, we ran the inaugural online Raising the Bar Home Edition out of necessity, but due to its popularity, it's back for 2021, complementing the real-life event in April. Over six weeks in July and August, there will be six talks by some of the University's top researchers. Sign up at [rtbevent.com](https://rtbevent.com) for information on speakers and dates. You can also watch the 2020 RTB Home Edition talks at [auckland.ac.nz/rtb-2020](https://auckland.ac.nz/rtb-2020). To simply listen to past RTBs, head to [soundcloud.com/university-of-auckland](https://soundcloud.com/university-of-auckland).



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